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SKETCH
OF THE
REFORMATION IN ENGLAND.

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OF THE
REFORMATION IN ENGLAND.

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PAUL'S CROSS.

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MDCCCXXXII.

" They that goe downe to the sea in ships, and occupie by the great waters, they see the workes of the Lord, and his wonders in the deepe. ~~But~~ God is marvellous in the surges and tempests of the sea: he is marvellous in the firmament of heaven: but much more marvellous is he in the surges and stormy tempests of his church. Heere may we behold the worke of his hands. This is the shop of his power, of his wisdom, of his light, and truth, and righteousness, and patience, and mercy. Heere may we see the children of light, and the children of darknesse: the vessels of honor, and the vessels of shame: the assaults of falshood, and the glorie and victorie of truth. Heere shall we see how God leadeth even into hell, and yet bringeth safely backe: how he killeth, and yet reviveth: how he refuseth the full, and feedeth the hungrie: how he is the ruine of many, and the resurrection of many. Heere may we see the wonderfull waies, and the unsearchable Judgements of God."

BISHOP JEWEL, *Sermon on Jos. vi. 1.*

PREFACE.

THE Reformation is one of the most remarkable events in our history, whether considered in relation to politics or religion ; for its influence was most powerful upon both. My own reading, profession, and taste have led me to regard it in the latter rather than in the former light ; and therefore, brief as the following sketch is, it will not be found of the nature of an abridgment of larger histories of the Reformation, which have contemplated it in all its many bearings, but a continuous, though succinct account, of its rise, progress, and consummation, chiefly considered as a great Revolution of the Church. I have avoided, as far as I could, taking my materials at second hand. I have been governed in my choice of them by a desire to seize upon such as, being characteristic in kind, might not be oppressive in number ; and I have worked them up into a whole, with less regard to the line and rule by which others may have wrought already, than to the positions into which they seemed of them-

selves to fall most naturally. If in my treatment of the many delicate and difficult questions which such a subject stirs, I have former writers with me, it is well. I have not however, constrained myself to seek out their path and ensue it, though I am too conscious of my own deficiencies, and of the extreme uncertainty of history, to be otherwise than pleased, if I happen to strike into it un-awares. If, on the same occasions, I have the good fortune to agree with the voice of my own times, it is well too : it is folly to be singular, except for the purpose of being right ; but still I have not hearkened out for that voice, and studiously walked by it — I have gone as my facts directed me, taking them as I found them, unpacked. For those facts I have generally given my authorities, that my readers may judge for themselves of the credit due to them ; and for the speculations which accompany them, whether doctrinal or practical, I may say that they are meant to serve the cause of truth and equity, not of party ; it is for others to say whether they are reasonable, and to let them prevail only so far as they prove so — *valeant quantum valent*.

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A SKETCH

REFORMATION IN ENGLAND.

CHAPTER I.

**BRITISH AND ANGLO-SAXON CHURCHES. — INTER-
COURSE WITH ROME. — EARLY CORRUPTIONS.**

THE Reformation is not to be regarded as a great and sudden event which took the nation by surprise. It was merely the crisis to which things had been tending for some centuries; and if the fire did at last run over the country with wonderful rapidity, it was because the trees were all dry. It is a mistake to suppose that whilst the Roman catholic religion prevailed all was unity. True it is, that the elements of discontent were as yet working for the most part underground, but they were not on that account the less likely to make themselves eventually felt. The strong man armed was keeping the house, and therefore his goods were at peace; but he was in jeopardy long before he was spoiled.

Luther was the match that produced the explosion, but the train had been laid by the events of generations before him.

It may not then be the least useful, nor, perhaps, the least interesting portion of a History of the Reformation in England, to trace some of the causes that led to it; some of the incidents that made it practicable, and some of the abuses that rendered it necessary. And here there is no need to conceal the obligations we were under in the first instance to the church of Rome. Neither Gregory himself, nor Augustin his messenger, appears to have been influenced by any other than a truly Christian spirit in seeking the conversion of England, then no very tempting prize; and though there can be no doubt that Christianity had been introduced into this island much earlier, whether by any of the apostles themselves; whether after the persecution on the death of Stephen, by some of the Syrian Christians, "who were scattered abroad, and went every where preaching the word¹;" whether by devout soldiers of the same nation, whom the famine foretold by Agabus might have driven into the armies of Claudius, and who might have come with him into Britain²; or whether by some of the Jewish converts dispersed over the world, when that same emperor "commanded all Jews to depart from Rome³;"—whether from these or from other sources unknown to us, England was in some degree Christianised, the existence of a British church before

¹ Acts, xi. 19.

² Acts, xi. 28.

³ Acts, xviii. 2.

the arrival of Augustin in the year 597 is a fact clearly established. Its independent origin is sufficiently attested by the subjects of controversy between the Anglo-Roman and British Christians; the time of Easter, in which the Britons followed, as they said, St. John and the eastern Christians, a point of heterodoxy, it may be observed, in which the Irish also concurred¹, who in some other respects accorded with the British church, building their places of worship, for instance, with wood, and thatching them with reeds²; the tonsure, whether it should be that of Peter or Paul, or none whatever³; the rite of baptism, with regard to which, however, the nature of the difference between the churches does not appear, though a difference there was⁴; and the same may be said of the celibacy of the clergy. The Britons had churches of their own, built after a fashion of their own; their own saints; their own hierarchy; — the British bishops attending a council as such, and holding no intercourse with the Angles even in Bede's time, but looking on them as Samaritans.⁵ Moreover, the jealousy with which the Welsh long afterwards regarded all ecclesiastical interference on the part of England, their resolute assertion of their right to a metropolitan of their own at St. David's, and their actual exercise of that right till the time of Henry I., argues the same difference in the rock from which the English and

¹ Bede's Hist. Eccles. 169.

² Bede, 255. 459. 480.

³ Bede, 34. 169. 158.

⁴ Bede, 233.

⁵ Bede, 437.

British churches were originally hewn.¹ Let, however, tribute be paid to whom tribute is due; Augustin was the founder of the English church as distinguished from the British, for the Britons made a conscience of leaving the Pagan invaders to die in their ignorance and their sins; and it is probable that both in doctrine and discipline the religion of this country owed to the great Apostle of England (as he has been called) its revival, extension, and permanent establishment. But Gregory was no pope in the more modern sense of the word; it was his desire that the church of Rome should be followed by the church of England when there was reason for it, not otherwise; he would have some errors re-proved; some he would have tolerated; some he would not have seen, that all might be done away; ecclesiastical property he would have recovered, where it had been plundered; but that more should be exacted than had been taken away, or that a merchandise should be made of the loss, that was to be far from the church.² No wonder that the Gospel, mixed though it certainly was even then with some alloy, should have made its way in England, recommended by a spirit like this, and that kings should have been found its nursing-fathers³; accordingly they erected crosses; built and endowed churches and monasteries; and the fierce superstitions of the Saxons made way for the religion of Jesus. But the mystery of iniquity had begun to work

¹ Girald. Cambr. apud Hen. Wharton, v. ii. p. 533.
Angl. Sacra.

² Bede, 82. *et seq.*

³ Bede, 116.

even in Bede's time.¹ His portrait of Aidanus or Madoc, a missionary from Icolmkill to the Angles near a century before, is clearly meant to contrast with the ecclesiastics of his own day. He might have been the prototype of Chaucer's "poore parson of a towne." He was chaste; he lived as he taught others to live; he travelled through the villages teaching the word, not on horseback, but on foot. Those whom he met, if believers, he confirmed in the faith; if unbelievers, he initiated in it; unlike the idlers of these times (says Bede), all who were in his company, whether priests or people, were busied in reading the Scriptures, or learning the Psalms by rote. There was a stirring amongst the dry bones through his exertions; the people flocked to hear the word of God; churches were built in many places, and monasteries were enriched by the bounty of the king. Such is the picture drawn by Bede, coloured perhaps somewhat too highly; for it seems unlikely that such effects, to their full extent, should have been produced by a teacher who spoke the language of his hearers but imperfectly, and had occasional need of an interpreter.² Much, however, might have been done, in a popular cause, even in spite of such an obstacle. Giraldus tells us that when he preached the crusades to the Welshmen at Haverford West, he could gain 200 recruits at a sermon in French or Latin, of which the people did not understand one word, though they knew and approved its object.³ Still in a sketch which

¹ Bede died A. D. 735.

² Bede, 165.

³ Angl. Sacra, v. ii. p. 491.

Bede gives us of the state of a convent (consisting as was not uncommon both of monks and nuns), at a period not much later than Madoc, there is a sad falling off. The case is indeed spoken of as a flagrant one, and the facts are to be gathered out of a fabulous story of a warning sent by an angel to a monk of that house, signifying that a judgment was coming upon it; for that of its inmates none (save one only) were occupied with the good of their souls; all were asleep, or only awake to sin, both men and women; the cells intended for study and prayer had been converted into chambers of revelry and excess; the virgins who had dedicated themselves to God, having no respect unto their vows, employed all their leisure hours in adorning their persons, as though they were brides, or wished to be.¹ Indeed, on one occasion about the same time, when a panic prevailed through the country by reason of the plague, it was actually attempted in one quarter of the island where Christianity had been received, to repair the temples and restore idolatry.² Whatever, therefore, the wheat might be that had been sown by Augustin and his companions, the tares, it seems, were growing about it apace, and were ready to choke it. The truth, however, appears to be, that as yet there was no well-organised church in England. There was wanted a system in matters ecclesiastical; what was done was done chiefly by good and zealous individuals. Rome might have supplied the defect; but the relation in which

England stood to Rome is not easily determined from the history of Bede; it was probably ill defined, fluctuating, and uncertain, depending in a great measure upon the accident of the day. Pope Gregory is indeed represented as speaking with some authority in the answers which he returns to Augustin, who consults him on the regulations of the infant church;—he may furnish him with sacred vessels, ornaments, robes, relics, books, and give him power to consecrate bishops in Britain, and directions for using it. Reference may be made to the pope from time to time, in any crisis of difficulty, or doubt, or hardship; wholesome decrees with regard to the method of filling up the sees in case of death may be received from him; his influence may be asked to protect the liberties of a religious house; but distance and the turbulence of the times rendered the intercourse difficult, and subjected it to much interruption. Rome was in those days pestilential¹; the Alps were formidable, often fatal to travellers; the seas were full of danger in the actual state of navigation; it was a weary way from Calais to Marseilles (one of the usual routes), and if the political aspect of things rendered a mayor of the palace suspicious, it might be worse than a weary way;—a journey to Rome for the sake of gaining religious knowledge was reckoned in the middle of the seventh century a labour of uncommon merit.² The church of England therefore, was left for a while pretty much to itself; and though great good came of this, it

¹ Bede, 254.

² Bede, 252.

was not without its mixture of evil. On the one hand, the liberties of the rising church were fostered by this non-intercourse with Rome; it threw the nation very much upon its own resources, and gave to the king, and above all, to synods of the clergy, an authority in ecclesiastical affairs, to which they might not otherwise have attained. Perhaps, too, it cultivated a better understanding between the princes and prelates, who seem to have gone hand in hand in these early times; the former inviting, welcoming, and establishing by grants of land for ever the residence of these Christian pastors amongst their own people, — a measure of which they might not have thought the advantages so obvious, had they thereby subjected themselves and their conduct to the perpetual animadversion of a third party at Rome; for it is curious to observe that, within 200 years after the foundation of the Anglo-Saxon church, Aldfrid, a king of Northumbria, feels himself called upon to resist the interference of the pope in a case of appeal, and actually refuses to listen to his recommendation.¹ On the other hand, a want of combination and co-operation (a defect so injurious to every great undertaking, and not the least so to the successful preaching of the word of God,) made itself sensibly felt in the religious establishment of England. Canons seem to have been published, but not to have been rigidly observed. The order of episcopal succession appears to have proceeded upon no very settled or plan; not that it was vitiated by any incom-

¹ Bede, 446.

petency of the parties to administer the rite ; but that the exercise of the episcopal office was desultory, — a synod, or an individual, or a king soliciting it ; a native bishop, or a foreigner, as it might happen, conferring it ; — so that, shortly before Bede's time¹, there was only one canonical bishop throughout all England. All this worked confusion in the church ; it impaired its efficiency ; it gave the ancient prejudices of Paganism, and other causes of corruption, time to rally, and to debase the Gospel, if they could not destroy it. Accordingly Oswi, king of Northumbria, and Ecbert, king of Kent, thought it high time to bestir themselves. They consulted together on the actual condition of the church, and came to a determination, in which the church itself concurred, to send a priest of their common choosing to Rome, to be there consecrated archbishop of Canterbury, who might thenceforth supply the sees of England canonically, and set in order its ecclesiastical rites. The office, however, of reforming the Anglo-Saxon church was not destined to the man of their choice, — he, and all his, died, probably of the malaria ; and Theodore, a monk “ of Tarsus, a city of Cilicia,” was finally fixed upon by the pope, consecrated archbishop of Canterbury, and despatched to England. He seems to have been one of those persons whose spirit and talents give a character to the times in which they live. He made a visitation of all England, correcting abuses, establishing discipline, ordaining bishops, re-ordaining those whose commission was irregular, introducing

¹ Bede, 247.

music generally into the churches, the use of it having been as yet confined to Kent, and encouraging the study of Greek and Latin, of which the effects were felt in the days of Bede. Thus did he reduce to order a very disorderly state of things ; and, in spite of the various independent kingdoms into which the island was divided, and by which misrule had been perpetuated, was an archbishop (and he was the first) to whom the universal church of England submitted.¹ That he might consolidate his acts, and render the unity of his church lasting, he convoked a synod of the bishops and clergy at Heorutford (Hereford)² about the year 673, and proposed for their adoption several canons, which, as they throw considerable light on the state of ecclesiastical affairs at that period, are here inserted:—

1. That all persons should keep Easter in common, on the Sunday after the full moon after the vernal equinox.
2. That no bishop should interfere with the diocese of another, but be content with governing his own.
3. That no bishop should be at liberty to disturb a religious house in any wise, nor to take from it any portion of its property by force.
4. That monks should not migrate from one monastery to another without the certificate of their own abbot, but should continue under the rule to which they at first professed obedience.
5. That the clergy should not withdraw themselves from their own proper bishop to wander about at large ; nor should be received elsewhere unless provided with letters

* ¹ Bede, 258.

* ² Bede, 271.

commendatory from that bishop; under pain of excommunication. 6. That bishops and clergy, who are strangers, should be treated hospitably, and be therewith content, abstaining from the exercise of their office, unless permitted by the bishop of the diocese in which they are staying to do otherwise. 7. That a synod should be held twice a year; on which, however, an amendment was moved and carried, that it should be once a year only, and on the first of August. 8. That the bishops should take precedence according to the priority of their consecration. 9. That the number of bishops, in consideration of the multitudes added to the church, should be augmented: and, lastly, that license should be allowed to no man to contract an unlawful or incestuous marriage; that no man should put away his wife, but as the Gospel permits—for the cause of fornication; and that whoso should put away his wife should never be joined to another, if he would not forfeit the name of Christian; but either remain single or be reconciled to the same. From these provisions it may be conjectured what were the prevailing defects of the church establishment in the seventh century; and it is not difficult to see in them, though as yet undeveloped, several of the evils which were destined to call for a reformation eight centuries later. On the whole, the Anglo-Saxon church was now more perfectly modelled upon the Roman than it had yet been; and, accordingly, some years afterwards, a certain king of the Picts, Naiton by name, sent to England for instructions on church architecture, and the right

observance of Easter, having heard (as he said) that the English had conformed to the example of the holy apostolical church of Rome.¹ As years roll on the intercourse between this country and Italy increases²; — a pilgrimage to Rome, which, in the middle of the seventh century, was unusual³, at the close of it was common enough. Thus Ceadwalla, king of the West Saxons, abdicated, and repaired to Rome for baptism; took the name of Peter; died, and was buried in the church of that apostle. His successor, Ine, commending, in like manner, his kingdom to the care of younger men, after a reign of thirty-seven years, repaired to the threshold of the blessed apostles, desiring to sojourn for a season upon that holy ground whilst on earth, that he might thereby secure to himself a more friendly reception among the saints in heaven. Cœnred, king of the Mercians, and Offa, heir-apparent of the kingdom of the East Saxons, pursued the same course; which, indeed, was now adopted both by noble and ignoble, priests and people, men and women, with the utmost emulation.⁴

Rome, however, had by this time, corrupted the simplicity of the faith, as it was taught there by St. Paul in his own hired house; and whilst, no doubt, the English pilgrims who returned brought away with them much to civilise and something to edify, they brought away with them, too, much to corrupt the church at home. For Rome was under a temptation to mingle sacred and profane together; it did not, like

¹ Bede, 453.

² Bede, 322.

³ Bede, 371.

⁴ Bede, 395. 438.

Constantinople, rise at once a Christian capital. The Gospel was introduced into it, and had to win its way by slow degrees through the ancient sympathies and inveterate habits of the Pagan city. It was a maxim with some of the early promoters of the Christian cause to do as little violence as possible to existing prejudices. They would run the risk of Barnabas being confounded with Jupiter, and Paul with Mercurius. In the transition from Pagan to Papal Rome much of the old material was worked up. The heathen temples became Christian churches; the altars of the gods, altars of the saints; the curtains, incense, tapers, votive tablets, remained the same; the aquaminarium was still the vessel for holy water; St. Peter stood at the gate instead of Cardea; St. Rocque or St. Sebastian in the bed-room, instead of the "Phrygian Penates;" St. Nicholas was the sign of the vessel, instead of Castor and Pollux; the Mater Deum became the Madonna; alms pro Matre Deum became alms for the Madonna; the festival of the Mater Deum, the festival of the Madonna, or *Lady Day*; the Hostia, or victim, was now the Host; the "Lugentes Campi," or dismal regions, Purgatory¹; the offerings to the Manes were masses for the dead. The parallel might be drawn out to a far greater extent; indeed, so much of the Roman had been grafted upon the Roman catholic system during the

¹ The very name, purgatory, is heathen. The annual feast of purification in February was called "Sacram Purgatorium." Vide Augustin, de Civ. Dei, l. vii. c. 7.; also Jewel's Def. of the Apology, part ii. c. 16. § 12

dark ages (as they are called) that the confusion of ideas and of terms resulting from it forms quite a feature in the writings of the Italian authors who lived at the revival of letters. Images, holy and unholy, are by them crowded together without the smallest regard to decency, though evidently without any intention to offend against it in the parties themselves. Such was the process of deterioration which the Gospel was undergoing at Rome (progressive because profitable) at the time when our Anglo-Saxon ancestors were improving their acquaintance with that city by repairing to it for purposes of devotion.

What were the doctrines and practices which at present prevailed in the Anglo-Saxon church, and how far it was exempt from the errors of later times, it is not easy to determine; more especially as the ecclesiastical history of Bede, and the early Saxon homilies and canons, quoted by his commentators, would often lead us to conflicting conclusions:—

L. With regard to the doctrine of *transubstantiation*, we read in Bede of the “bread of life,” “the holy bread¹,” of a man dying without the “viaticum salutis²,” of another, enquiring, when at the point of death, of his attendant in a monastery, whether they had the “eucharist in the house?”³ and though, on one occasion, the mass is spoken of as a *sacrifice* (*mysterii immolationis*)⁴, yet it may be contended that the term is Gregory’s own (for it occurs in the answer re-

¹ Bede, 122.

² Bede, 230.

³ Bede, 431.

⁴ Bede, 94.

turned by him to Augustin's queries), and that it cannot be fairly ascribed to the venerable historian himself. Meanwhile a canon, said to be of the age of archbishop Theodore, (and if so, more ancient than the history, and though written in Latin, accompanied by a Saxon translation, which, at any rate, pleads some antiquity in its favour,) argues the body of Christ to be present in the elements, not substantially, but spiritually; adding, that this mode is recognised by St. Paul, who speaks of the Israelites as "eating all of the same *spiritual* meat, and drinking of that *spiritual* rock which followed them, and that rock was Christ." ¹

II. On the subject of *image worship*, the Anglo-Saxon church does not seem to have been altogether blameless. In the preface to the Laws of Alfred, though the other commandments are enumerated in their order, the second is omitted, only there is added after the rest, — "Thou shalt not make gods of silver or gold." There must have been a reason for such a change in the positive terms and relative position of this law; and it is difficult to assign any reason but one.²

III. Purgatory was a part of the Anglo-Saxon creed. This, indeed, was established on authority. Drithelme, a famous saint (as he proved) of Northumbria, died and was buried; but he was born to refute the apophthegm that dead men tell no tales, for he returned to life, and gave an

¹ Bede, 334. ed. Wheloc.

² Prefat. in *Leges Aluredi Regis*, p. 16. ed. Wheloc.

account of his travels.¹ He had been conducted by an angel in white raiment towards the sun-rising to a valley of vast depth and interminable extent; the one side of it glowing with fire, the other pelted by fierce and incessant storms of snow and hail. Between these two conflicting elements he beheld the souls of miserable mortals bandied to and fro, anxious to escape from the intolerable anguish of the moment, and thus perpetually leaping from side to side in this unhappy valley. Such was Purgatory. But though Drithelme made these matters known to one Hæmgils, an Irishman, and through Hæmgils they were communicated to Bede, the doctrine does not appear to have been universally held in the Saxon church, or, at least, to have had a very prominent place in its articles of faith. Certain it is, that in some Anglo-Saxon sermons and confessions yet extant, no mention is made of it, where mention of it might be expected.² Still, the doctrine was clearly abroad; and in the form it had assumed the Platonic purgatory was improved upon, and the poets, from Cædmon³ downwards, availed themselves of these fearful images, conjured up by the morbid imagination of the early monks, and consigned, in their turn,

——— “the delighted spirit
To bathe in *fiery* floods, or to reside
In thrilling regions of thick-ribbed ice.”⁴

¹ Bede, 411.

² Bede, ed. Wheloc, p. 422. et seq.

³ Turner's Ang. Sax. iii. 362.

⁴ Measure for Measure, act iii. sc. 1.

IV. Purgatory of course brought other doctrines in its train;—penance for the living, that they might never come into it¹; confession, that penance might be enjoined and adjusted²; masses for the dead, that they might be delivered from it.³ These acts were not, perhaps, for a while, considered obligatory. The abuses of the Roman catholic church did not come of observation, but crept into the world by stealth, till, having at length established themselves *de facto*, they were confirmed by the decrees of some general council, and thenceforth became *de jure* a part and parcel of the catholic creed. Thus the use of images by degrees prevailed, till it was eventually authorised by a decree of a council at Nice in the year 787. The doctrine of transubstantiation gained a footing in credulous times, and was encouraged from interested motives, (for who should set bounds to the authority of a priest who had power to produce the Deity himself at his bidding?⁴) till it was pronounced orthodox at the council of Placentia, in 1095. The communion, in one kind only, had become customary (from whatever cause), and the practice received the placet of the church in 1415, at the council of Constance.

V. The Virgin appears to have been held in great, perhaps in idolatrous, honour by the Anglo-Saxon church. It is true that —

¹ Bede, 430.

² Bede, 336. 344. 349. 417.

³ Bede, 164. 315. 431.

⁴ This argument is actually urged in favour of the dignity of the priesthood in the *Catechismus ad Parochos*, p. 270.

The cross preceding Him who floats in air,
The pictured Saviour!

was to be seen in the processions of Augustin, and not the Virgin¹; and in general her name but seldom occurs in the Ecclesiastical History of Bede; still even here some shadows of the glories that were coming upon her advance to meet us. Eadbald the son of Ethelbert, Augustin's friend, is said to have founded a church after his extraordinary conversion (for he had not in early life walked in the ways of his father) to "the Holy Mother of God²:" and Bishop Wilfrid is declared by an angel (so the legend runs) to have been delivered from death by our Lord, at the prayers and tears of the bishop's disciples and brethren, and "the *intercession* of his own blessed virgin-mother Mary."³

VI. But, indeed, the office of intercession was not confined to the Virgin.⁴ The Saxon *saints* were powerful both in heaven and earth; nothing was too great or too mean for their interference. They could recover a man from the brink of the grave, or cure a horse of the colic.⁵ They could clear an island of evil spirits, though it had been over-run with them like a warren; and fill it with springs of water though it had been dry and desolate.⁶ They could mend a fractured skull, and tell whether the party had been baptized imperfectly,

¹ Bede, 78.

² Bede, 134. This phrase, however, might only indicate that Eadbald would have supported in the Nestorian controversy.

³ Bede, 446.

⁴ Bede, 35, 186.

⁴ Bede, 281.

⁶ Bede, 351.

ineffectually, or not at all, by the rate of the recovery.¹ A hair of their heads would cure a wen.² They could disperse an abscess on the arm (without recourse to surgery), though large as a man's two hands, and though it should have been occasioned by bleeding when the moon was four days' old, which (it seems) was an act of incredible folly.³ Nor was this all; they could unfold the secrets of the grave with the utmost minuteness. One could tell of his encounter with the soul of a sinner in the other world, which was flung at him red-hot and burnt his shoulder and cheek, though when relating his adventure, even if it were in the depth of winter, and however light might be his dress, the saint would sweat as if it were the dog-days.⁴ Another could speak of a journey, under the safe-conduct of a guardian angel, to the same mysterious region; of his approach to the brink of the bottomless pit, through an atmosphere of insufferable stench and darkness; of the balls of fire which were shot upwards out of the abyss and fell into it again, scintillating with the spirits of the damned; of the sudden disappearance of his heavenly guide; of his hearing behind him in this joyless solitude the hollow shrieks of dead men's souls as they were led to the pit's mouth, mixed with the loud and jubilant laughter of the fiends who conducted them; of their plunge into the burning bottomless gulf; of the dolorous moanings and peals of merriment dying away as they went down into the deep together; of the legion of hideous forms

¹ Bede, 389.² Bede, 366.³ Bede, 374.⁴ Bede, 213.

which now encompassed him about, threatening to seize him with their fiery pincers, but having no power over him to hurt him; of his casting around a wistful eye to see if there were any to help him; and of his discovering in the distance, as it twinkled through the darkness, the light, as it were, of a star; of its rapid approach and gradual developement, till the guardian angel again stands confessed before him; the devils retire; and he is rewarded for his alarm by a translation to the harmonious sounds, the Sabean odours, the pure and placid beams of Paradise.¹

Whilst, however, we gather these exploits of the early saints of our country from the pages of Bede, it is only just to the memory of that veracious and single-hearted writer to observe, that numerous as may be the lying wonders which he relates and believes on the testimony of others, of his own actual knowledge he does not pretend to one. But wherefore are they touched upon at all? Simply because they are characteristic of the times whereof they are told: they supply a gauge by which we can measure the degree and the progress of those corruptions from which the Reformation finally delivered us. Monstrous as these legends are, they were the faith of the nation; for if Bede receives them as facts, were his countrymen in general, so much less enlightened than himself, likely to reject them as fictions? Moreover, they are curious as specimens of a vast magazine of materials, which supplied poetry when it revived after the bar-

¹ Bede, p. 411, et seq. Comp. Dante *Purgator.* ii.

barous ages with much of its wild as well as ludicrous imagery. Dante worked them up into his *Divina Comedia*. His *Inferno*, especially, is the offspring of an imagination that had dieted with these monkish mysteries; and it may be observed by the way, that even our own *Paradise Lost* may have felt their influence, and that Milton may be indirectly indebted for many of the dark and terrible features of his hell to early hagiography. Romance, if it did not owe its existence, owed much of its furniture to the same common stock. The poets of romance drew from it, either directly or through the chroniclers, the adventures that suited them. Turpin, a fictitious archbishop, is constantly introduced by them with solemn sneers, as a voucher for the most extravagant feats of their favourites, and thus the dishonest fictions of the priesthood were made eventually to recoil upon their own order, and swell the cry for reformation; for these popular writers, without, perhaps, intending it, or caring much about the matter, did, undoubtedly, lend a helping hand to the great cause by laughing at much that was fairly ridiculous in the doctors and the doctrines of their day: happy had they known where to stop, and not to rush upon things truly sacred with the temerity of fools.

But one conservative principle there was in the economy of the Anglo-Saxon church that opposed itself to still further corruption of the faith of Christ, and that was, the free use of the word of God. The Scriptures might not, indeed, be very generally read; Bede complains that they were not; but there was no hinderance thrown

in the way of reading them, quite the contrary : he himself gave a translation of the Gospel of St. John ; one of the Psalter had appeared already ; and in the interval that elapsed before the Norman conquest other portions of Holy Writ were put forth from time to time in the same vernacular language. Virtue, no doubt, went out of these, narrow as might be the limits within which they circulated ; and it is no unusual matter to find in the pages of Bede, and in the midst of the legends, relics, visions, and superstitions, of which they are full, occasional glimpses of better things, and some of the cardinal doctrines of Christianity still struggling vigorously for their lives.¹

¹ See pp. 206. 329.

CHAP. II.

DIVISIONS AMONGST ECCLESIASTICS. — THE REGULAR AND SECULAR CLERGY. — THE POPE FAVOURS THE FORMER. — EXEMPTIONS FROM EPISCOPAL JURISDICTION. — HABITS OF THE FRIARS.

IN tracing the progress of corruption in the English church and the causes of it, we have hitherto had a trustworthy guide in the venerable Bede; henceforward, to the time of the Normans, there is much in our history that is dark, intricate, and uncertain.¹ Many early church-records have perished in the fires which on different occasions have consumed our cathedrals;—such was the fate of the documents in the cathedral of Canterbury (of all others the most to be desired), which were burnt together with that primitive structure soon after the Norman conquest.² A similar loss, and probably one much greater in extent, was sustained through the great fire of London, when St. Paul's, with its chapter-house and the writings contained in it, fell a prey to the flames³; not to speak of the

¹ *Canonicus Lichfeld. de Success. Archiep. Cant. ap. Wharton, Anglia Sacra, i. 95.*

² *Osbern. ap. Wharton, Angl. Sacr. ii. 89.*

³ *Burnet's Hist. Reform. v. i. 130. v. iii. introd. xvi. fol.*

wholesale destruction or dispersion of books and papers which accompanied the suppression of the religious houses, and which left to the fell swoop of the puritans but little to do in order to extinguish much of the ancient ecclesiastical annals of England.

However, it was undoubtedly during the interval in question, that a schism arose in the church, which eventually hastened the crisis of the Reformation beyond any one thing else, by dividing the house against itself. The famous Dunstan, who was born in the year 925, was the man to sow the dragon's tooth. As yet the different orders of ecclesiastics had lived in harmony. There were secular clergy, and there were regulars; but the latter had not hitherto taken kindly root in England. The great number of churches existing in this kingdom in the middle ages¹ (of which many traces yet remain in a name, where both the building itself and all tradition of it have passed away,) bespeaks the popularity of the secular clergy, for it is not probable that these churches were then served from the monasteries; and, moreover, the lodgment which the seculars effected in the religious houses, as the latter were from time to time

¹ In "The Supplication of Beggars," they are stated at 55,000. (See Fox's Acts and Mon. ii. 280. edit. 1631-2, with the note.) The number may be exaggerated; but it will seem less extraordinary when it is remembered that one of the qualifications of a thegn or thane, a lower class of nobles, having some analogy to the barons of Norman times, was, that he should have five hides of his own land and a church. (See Turner's Angl. Sax. ii. 265.)

evacuated of their inmates by the exterminating sword of the Danes, was the object as well as the cause of their increasing influence. Accordingly Dunstan found many, if not all, of the monasteries, as well as the cathedrals, in the hands of the canons secular, who resided with their families, performing the daily service, and standing upon much the same footing as such persons now do in our collegiate churches.¹ The saint, however, was not satisfied with the state of disorganisation and decay to which the monastic order was reduced,—he determined upon its reformation. The Benedictine rule, now become popular throughout Europe, was chosen for his experiment, and the monks were set up against the canons and the clergy. Dunstan was not very scrupulous about the justice of the means he used to accomplish his end; if he could not find a way he could make one. He would enjoin the king (Edgar), for instance, as a penance, to suppress the seculars and introduce the monks into the churches in their stead. It is in vain that synods are held wherein the grievances of the ecclesiastics thus violently ejected are propounded; it is in vain that their sufferings excite the sympathy of the nobles and the monarch, who plead for their restoration. “That be far from you—that be far from you,” were the inexorable words which issued from a crucifix in the council-chamber, for Dunstan had called in the supernatural to his help. A second effort is made in behalf of these deprived ministers. Again the saint commits the decision of his cause

¹ Angl. Sacr. ii. 91.

to heaven, though less innocently than before. The building where they were met is shaken; the floor, at least that part of it which was occupied by the adversaries of Dunstan, sinks from under their feet; and whilst Dunstan and his friends continue to sit in safety, the rest are destroyed or disabled in the ruin. There is much in both these adventures to fasten suspicion upon the saint; for Dunstan, like Cromwell and many more, began his career, in all probability, as a bold and honest zealot, till leight begot high thoughts, and he ended with being an ambitious and unflinching adventurer. He was, however, one of the master-spirits of the age. He was, strictly speaking, the founder of the monastic orders in England. They regarded him, whilst living, as their fearless champion, and when dead, as their most powerful intercessor: he gave a triumph to their party which they never forfeited; and having once by his means taken the lead of the secular clergy, they kept it to the Reformation. From amongst the monks of Abingdon, Winchester, and Glastonbury, the three greatest monasteries in England, and from the last more especially, which was Dunstan's own abbey, were for a long while chosen almost all the abbots, principal ecclesiastical officers, and bishops of England¹: such was the influence which this extraordinary man had established in his generation; and the natural consequence of so great and so successful an innovation was, a deep-rooted jealousy on the part of the ancient clergy towards the regulars,

¹ Hen. Wharton, Angl. Sacr. i. 126.

who had ~~up~~planted them, and heart-burnings between both parties, which were injurious alike to religion itself and to the establishment which should have been its support. Traces of this ~~schism~~ism, for such it really was, may be discovered both in great matters and small. It spread through the whole church system like a leprosy. The architecture and ornaments of the churches bespoke it. Many of those grotesque figures which are seen to this day decorating the spouts of the roof, or the labels of the windows, were probably meant as a fling at the monks; and satirical caricatures to the same effect may still occasionally be met with on the painted glass of our cathedrals. It gives a complexion to our early literature; and the old chroniclers, being chiefly monks, betray on their side the same besetting sin, often without intending it, and sometimes to their own confusion. Thus we are told by one, that as long as the canons were in possession of the church of Winchester no notice was taken of the remains of St. Swithin, nor had a single miracle been wrought at his grave; but that no sooner were the monks in possession, than they carefully deposited his honoured bones within the cathedral in a case of silver and gold, and miracles ensued abundantly;—premises from which the worthy Thomas Rudborne, himself a monk of Winchester, did not mean that we should infer (what, however, we naturally must) that the canons were the more honest men of the two. Thus, again, the biographer of Ulstan, a bishop of Worcester in the eleventh century, tells us that as the bishop was on a journey to court, to

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present at the Christmas festival, he halted the night at Merton, where he was hospitably entertained; that he informed his attendants he should on the morrow go to a distant church which he named; that the morning came, and with it a heavy storm of snow and rain; that his clergy made objections to such a journey in such weather; that go, however, the bishop would, even though he should be alone; that they were vexed, indeed, but held their peace; that one Frewen, a man of more audacity and address than the others, volunteered to be the good bishop's guide; that he acquitted him of his office but scurvily, somewhat as Ariel might have done, taking him by the hand and leading him by a road which proved knee-deep in mud and mire, and wherein the bishop lost a shoe; for it was a plan of the clergy, says William of Malmesbury, who tells this precious story, to make the bishop repent of his resolution, and be ruled by his chaplains. Ulstan, it is to be remembered, was a monk, and so was his biographer, and hence this impotent attempt to excommunicate the order at the expense of the poor secular. Such adventures are old wives' tales, it is true, but they are not on that account the less true for showing the quarter from which the wind was setting in. On the other hand, the secular clergy, though on many accounts acting at a disadvantage, and certainly as a body less literary than the monks, could occasionally retaliate. We have seen that one of their weapons of warfare was to decorate their churches with monkish

¹ William Malmesb. ap. Wharton, *Angl. Sacr.* ii. 260.

figures in ~~but~~ ~~the~~ ~~means~~ of molestation were not confined to these inartificial expédients. Langland, for instance, was a secular priest and a satirical poet, and in his vision of *Pierce Plowman* he lashes the regulars (though chiefly a class of them of whom we have not yet had occasion to speak) without moderation or mercy. Their artifices to procure endowments for their houses, their love of pleasure, their luxury, their horses, hawks, and hounds, are all touched in a spirit sufficiently caustic.¹ It is probable that the nobles in general took a malicious pleasure in encouraging this exposure of a class of men who were their rivals in wealth, and their superiors in intelligence, and thus widened the breach. Chaucer, who was a courtier as well as a poet, no doubt reflects the feelings of the upper ranks of his day, and he cleaves to the seculars. Meanwhile, neither of these ecclesiastical parties seems to have been aware that by their mutual criminations they were preparing the nation to demand a reformation in the manners of them all; and that each was throwing stones at the other, when the houses of both were made of glass.

But their strife was not merely a strife of tongues; it was their pleasure to thwart one another in deed as well as in word. Whenever the monks got footing in the cathedrals (which in many instances they very soon did), they proved a perpetual thorn in the side of the bishop, more especially if he happened to have been promoted from the secular clergy himself. Then

¹ See Warton's *Hist. of English Poetry*, i. 266. 4to.

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They carried themselves towards him in a spirit of "untamed reluctance." They would not have this man to reign over them. The bishops were vexed at thus having to encounter foes in their own households, and sometimes we find them expressing an angry but impotent wish, that England was clear of them; and sometimes we find them by a stretch of power expelling the whole fraternity at once, and filling up their places with canons who were ever wont to be faithful and obedient to their diocesan.¹ On one occasion, indeed, this policy is not only put in practice by a bishop of Winchester, but an attempt is made by him to induce all the prelates of England to adopt the same. William the Conqueror (for it was under him that the thing occurred) was nothing loth to listen to the overture of Walkelin (for that was the bishop's name), and to second this violent measure², probably meaning to lay claim to a lion's share of the spoil³; for the Norman princes, like some more modern reformers, had the appetite of the dragon of Wantley,—“houses and churches were to them geese and turkies;” but archbishop Lanfranc, the first metropolitan under the Norman dynasty, a good man and a wise, stood in the gap, and saved his church from the tender mercies of a reform; which being interpreted, would have been a robbery. He, again, had been himself a monk, and probably would on that account view the transgressions of the monks with more charity, and, perhaps, be personally less

¹ Angl. Sacr. i. 495.

² Angl. Sacr. i. 255.

³ Angl. Sacr. i. 248.

exposed to their malice. And indeed, if there must needs be this division of seculars and regulars, it was a happy circumstance for the church, and we will add for the country (for with all its gross defects it was the fountain of life and light to the nation in those times), that the dignitaries were taken from both classes, though chiefly, no doubt, from the regulars; and that thus they mutually acted as checks upon those classes, in any momentary ebullitions of party spirit; not to say that those who were removed from the monastery to the mitre would find their past prejudices corrected by a new position and new interests, and by the discovery that men of their own order were not always the most dutiful of their sons. Thus in the working of the system, there were some of those self-correcting principles and balances brought into play which in part protected it from itself, and the like to which (though so often overlooked or undervalued) constitute the real worth of many a system which wears an unpromising aspect, and which, in spite of those querulous empirics who assure us that it ought to go intolerably wrong, persists in going tolerably right notwithstanding. This observation is thrown out merely to account for the long continuance of a system, containing within itself such active elements of ruin, as, abstractedly considered, might have been expected to put an end to it much sooner.

But this is not all. In our *post-mortem* examination of the Roman catholic church of England, undertaken with a view to ascertain

the complicated disorders which made a way for its final dissolution, another feature presents itself, akin to the last, — William the Conqueror, who cared as little for the discipline of the church as for the laws of the land, thought proper to exempt a monastery which he had founded (that of St. Martin de Bello) from episcopal jurisdiction altogether. From this moment a mad ambition drove the monks of the principal religious houses to seek for themselves a similar privilege. Baldwin, abbot of St. Edmunds (Bury), at that time one of the finest foundations in England, obtained such exemption from pope Alexander, although, in the deed which conferred it, and which was executed before the year 1073, the pope, as if lending himself to a transaction hitherto unattempted and unheard of, expresses himself with some reserve, — “as far as the thing could be done, *salvâ primatis obedientiâ*,” consistently with obedience to the primate. Lanfranc, however, then archbishop, who watched over the interests of the church (as we have already seen) with a cautious and prophetic eye, took away this dangerous privilege from the abbot, on his return to England, and reduced him to submission. But less resolute men, such as Radulph, William, and Theobald, succeeding him in the primacy, and the liberties of the church of England having been, in the meanwhile, crippled by the machinations of Rome, the monks took courage, and, feeling their own strength, claimed exemption from the jurisdiction of archbishops as well as bishops, as a matter of right; and, producing certain charters

of ancient date (so they pretended), granted to them by popes or princes, carried their suit into the courts of Rome, and got it confirmed. This dispensation, bad in theory, was not better in practice. The monks of Malmesbury, for instance, had lately (about A. D. 1180) elected an abbot. The bishop of Salisbury interdicts the abbot elect from receiving the benediction at any other hands than his own; whereupon the latter goes into Wales, and procures it from the bishop of Landaff (for the Welsh church was still independent of England); on this the archbishop suspends the abbot until he can justify his disobedience by producing his letters of exemption. The abbot presents to the archbishop his charter, which turns out to be faulty in the style, the thread, and the seal, and which savours little of the court of Rome. The bishop asserts it to be spurious, and exhibits many professions of submission on the part of the abbot of Malmesbury, made to him or his predecessors. The abbot is contumacious, declares that he holds himself bound to answer to no superior, whether bishop or archbishop, but to the pope only; and adds, "Poor and miserable is the abbot who does not utterly annihilate the jurisdiction of a bishop, when, for a single ounce of gold a year, he may buy full liberty for himself from Rome." The archbishop, therefore, entreats the pope not to aid and abet this turbulent person; and, at the same time, bitterly laments the injury done, not to the bishop alone, but to the whole church, by these papal exemptions, — exemptions which had proved *ambus*

to the peace, discipline, and good order of the monasteries themselves which enjoyed them.¹ Here, therefore, was a rift in the church, which time only widened, and which unfitted it for sustaining a storm whenever it should come. But the mischief did not end here. Long before the monks had escaped from the eye of their bishop, they had relaxed from the Sabine simplicity of their primitive institutions: now that they were left at liberty to do what seemed good in their own sight, matters went worse. Giraldus Cambrensis, a writer of the twelfth century, tells us, that on his return from abroad (he had been prosecuting his theological studies at Paris) he dined with the monks of Canterbury. Having eaten of their bread, he lifts up his heel against them, and maliciously exposes their bill of fare. It is curious as a picture of the times: — sixteen lordly dishes and upwards, besides a course of herbs, which latter, however, were not in much request; fish of divers kinds — roast and boiled, stewed and fried; omelets, seasoned meats, and sundry provocatives of the palate, prepared by cunning cooks; wines in ample profusion; cicera, piment, claret, must, mede, and moretum (mulberry), — any thing and every thing but ale, the boast of England, and more especially of Kent. "What would Paul the hermit have said to all this?" thinks the splenetic Giraldus to himself, "or St. Anthony? or St. Benedict, the founder of the order?"² Such evidence, however, is to be received with considerable

¹ Angl. Sect. ii. par. 2. 4. ² Angl. Sect. ii. 480.

suspicion. There was, for ages, before their suppression, a stain at the monks. A strong party spirit discovers itself in almost all that relates to the church in these middle ages, much as we are told of the harmony that prevailed in it before the reformation. The writer just quoted was a Welsh archdeacon, very far from a good-natured Sir Hugh, who would "persuade a man not to make a star-chamber matter of it;" on the contrary, he finds nothing as it should be: he is one of those dissatisfied spirits that delight in the study of morbid anatomy; neither monks nor bishops please him; he vexes himself because he cannot make a hundred watches go by his own, never suspecting that, after all, his own may be wrong; and, in his Memoir of the Rights and Conditions of the Church of South Wales, he sums up the merits of the Cambrian clergy with a testy anathema, something after the manner of Bruce's benediction of the monks of Goudar, against the whole body, as traitors to him (though it does not appear that they had ever trusted him), and to the liberties of the church to which they belonged.¹ But, when every allowance is made for the prejudice of the witnesses of the day, it is clear that, by the thirteenth century, monks were no longer men of St. Benedict, and that another Dunstan, or a better man, was wanted to revive the monastic spirit, and to recover for the regulars the credit they had lost. Accordingly, in this century, the mendicant orders recently brought into being,

the maggots, not so much of corrupted texts as of corrupted times, — found their way into England. The Franciscans, or Friars Minors; the Dominicans, or Black Friars; the Carmelites, or White Friars; and the Augustines, or Grey Friars; were the four divisions. Of these, the two former were the most considerable; the Franciscans the chief of all. The first settlement of these last was at Canterbury, in 1234; that of the Dominicans, thirteen years earlier, at Oxford; at which place, as well as at Cambridge; all the four orders soon found themselves in possession of flourishing houses.¹ There was much to captivate in their prospectus. All worldly views they renounced; they depended upon the alms of the people; and the people, admiring their disinterestedness, and reverencing their piety (which was, or which seemed to be, much beyond that of the monks), were cheerful givers. They cultivated learning with great success; filled the professors' chairs in the universities; searched out manuscripts, and multiplied the copies; collected libraries at any cost (for their popularity furnished them with the means); not a treatise on the arts, theology, or the civil law appeared, but the friars bought it up. They improved the architecture of their country; for though their vow, like that of the Rhocubites, scarcely allowed them to sow seed or plant vineyard, or have any, it did not deny to them the building of houses; and, accordingly, on these were lavished the ample sums which

¹ Watson's *Hist. of Bologn.* i. 290. 4to.

the munificence of their benefactors poured into their treasury. It was the ambition of the great and noble that their bones should rest within these hallowed walls; and sumptuous shrines bespoke the mighty dead that slept in the chapels of St. Francis. All this might be well; but your friar was a sturdy beggar, and prosperity made him forget himself. He learned to drop the literary and religious character, and to assume the politician. He engaged in diplomacy; mixed in the intrigues of courts; discussed treaties, formed alliances, and resolutely maintained the authority of the pope (whose creature he was) against all the princes and prelates of Christendom. He was furnished by his master with powers for effecting all this; and these he used to the confusion both of seculars and monks. He could preach where he would; if he could not lawfully take possession of the church of the minister, he could erect his ambulatory pulpit at any cross, in any parish, and rail (as he generally did) at the supineness and ignorance of the resident pastor. If he chanced to be received under the parsonage roof (as he seldom was), he was felt to be a snake in the grass, ready to betray his host in return for his hospitality; and, if he saw a fowl on a dish on his table, to denounce him, in his next day's harangue, as a gluttonous man and a wine-bibber. He could confess whosoever might come to him. It was to no purpose that a pious priest refused absolution to any black shop

of his flock; away he went to a Franciscan, and absolution was given him at once; the more readily, indeed, as an opportunity was thus afforded the friar of expressing his contempt of every ecclesiastical body but his own. Nor did he enter into the labours of the parochial minister only; he had nobler game in another class of seculars — the cathedral clergy. These he reduced to poverty, and the venerable edifices to which they belonged to decay. The cathedrals were erected and maintained by the proceeds of lands, — endowments, for the most part, received from kings, as the parish churches were generally endowed by *lords of manors*; and dioceses, even in this day, would be found, we suspect, on a careful examination, to have a more than imaginary reference in their dimensions to the limits of the several Saxon kingdoms into which the island was divided, as parishes certainly have a reference to the estates of individuals. They were further supported by *pentecostals*, which was an annual composition paid by every household at Pentecost, as an acknowledgment of attachment to the mother church; and, lastly, by *benefactions, oblations, and gifts*, the free-will offerings of the multitude. For a long time these two latter sources of revenue were very considerable. The people had a pride and pleasure in contributing to the erection, the repairs, and the maintenance of these beautiful structures, which were at once the goodly ornaments of the districts in which they stood; the temples of God, to whose service the pious felt themselves thus giving back a part of what he had

freely conferred on them; and the tombs of their fathers; for it was the desire of those simple days to be buried near the grave of some man of God, whose memory was fragrant among them, and to lay their bones beside his bones. But the friars poisoned the minds of the people, and shook this allegiance. St. Francis was above all the saints, not to say above the Saviour himself. To die in the weeds of a Franciscan, was to die the death of the righteous; and to repose after death in a Franciscan monastery, was to have angels for the guardians of your sepulchre. Accordingly, about the fourteenth century, the penitentials began to be evaded; recovery was to be made of them by force of law; and free-will offerings to the cathedrals ceased altogether. The number of residentiaries was consequently reduced (a measure of necessity, which involved much subsequent inconvenience and legal dispute), and the buildings themselves were with difficulty preserved from the injuries of time.¹ Neither did the schism end here. Before, however, we go further, it may be due to ourselves to remark, that it is not because an historian of the reformation, protestant though he be, finds pleasure in thus uncovering the nakedness of the Roman catholic church, that he dwells so exclusively on its peccant parts, nor yet because he is not aware that better things may be said of it; but simply because his subject leads him to develope those defects, both in its doctrine and

¹ See an Essay on the Government of the Church of England, by George Reynolds, Archdeacon of Lincoln, p. 108. et seq.

discipline, which paved the way for its eventual overthrow, not to recount the virtues which, in spite of such defects, preserved it so long. At the same time, he naturally feels some satisfaction in vindicating his own church from a comparison by which it is thought to suffer, and which represents it as full of discord and division, whilst the church which it supplanted was at unity with itself. Such was not, we see, the case. Time has, indeed, hushed all report of the bickerings of men who lived three or four centuries ago, and it may be invidious to awake the echo; but tenderness to the dead must not betray us into injustice to the living, and however error may be concealed, it must not be consecrated by the grave. But to return: hitherto we have represented the friars as the enemies of the secular clergy only, whether cathedral or parochial. They had their stone, however, to cast at the monks. It was their pleasure to contrast their own affected poverty (which lasted just so long as they could not help it) with the gallant bearing, profuse expenditure, and ample retinues of these latter, who, in their turn, expressed their contempt for them, not the less cordially, perhaps, from a consciousness that the contrast was striking. In a manuscript which once belonged to a learned Benedictine, and is now in the library of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, is a drawing of four devils hugging four mendicant friars, one of each order, with great familiarity and affection.¹ But other

¹ Warton's Hist. of English Poetry, i. 292. 4to.

weapons, offensive and defensive, were used, besides ridicule. Thus the greater monasteries would occasionally rouse themselves, and found a small college or hall at the universities for their own novices, that they might not resign to their antagonists, without a struggle, the entire possession of those ancient seats of learning. So, again, when their members proceeded to degrees, they would often do it with studious cost and popular display, turning the occasion into a holiday spectacle, which might be set in balance against the miracles, mysteries, and other theatrical attractions of the mendicants.¹ These latter, however, might have long laughed at such artifices, had they continued true to one another; but the arrow which pierced them to the heart was feathered from their own wing. Their principles, like those of modern dissenters, propagated schism; they split amongst themselves; and the four orders tore the coat, which should be without seam, into as many parts. Mutual abuse, instead of cordial co-operation, was their maxim. The poor ploughman who sought instruction in his creed at the hands of the Friar Preachers, was only told, as he valued his soul, to beware of the Carmelites; the Carmelites promoted his edification by denouncing the Dominicans; the Dominicans, in their turn, by condemning the Augustines. "Be true to us," was the language of each; "give us your money, and you shall be saved without a creed."² In

¹ Warton's Hist. of English Poetry, i. 290.

² Ibid. 296.

deed, the frailty of human nature soon found out the weak places of the mendicant system. Soon had the primitive zeal of its founders burnt itself out; and then its censer was no longer lighted with fire from the altar:—a living was to be made. The vows of voluntary poverty only led to jesuitical expedients for evading it; a straining at gnats, and swallowing of camels. The populace were to be alarmed, or caressed, or cajoled out of a subsistence. A death-bed was a friar's harvest; then were suggested the foundation of chantries, and the provision of masses and wax-lights. The confessional was his exchequer; there hints were dropped that the convent needed a new window, or that it owed "fortie pound for stones." Was the good man of the house refractory? The friar had the art of leading the women captive, and reaching the family purse by means of the wife.¹ Was the piety of the public to be stimulated? Rival relics were set up, and impostures of all kinds multiplied without shame, to the impoverishment of the people, the disgrace of the church, and the scandal of Christianity.

It is revolting to bear record of these villanies;—to see sordid advantage taken of the most sacred feelings of mankind, and religion itself subjected to suspicion through the hypocrisy of its professors. But, however humiliating may be the confession, experience has sanctioned it as a truth, that an indigent church makes a corrupt clergy; that in order to secure a priesthood

¹ *Erasm. Collig. Franciscani. Chaucer.*

which shall wear well, a permanent provision must be set aside for their maintenance,—such a provision as shall induce men duly qualified, to enter the church: for it is visionary to suppose that temporal motives will not have their weight in this temporal state of things; and it is unreasonable to expect that persons who are excluded by the rules of society from the usual inlets to wealth, the courts, the camp, or the exchange, and who cannot but know or feel, when they are honestly doing their duty, that they are as good commonwealth's men, to put it upon no higher ground, as any others, and therefore have as good a right to its liberal regards as any others, should be content to waive this right;—such a provision as shall be enough to ensure recruits for the priesthood from all ranks, the highest as well as those below, and so to ensure their easy intercourse with all ranks; for the leaven should leaven the *whole* lump;—such a provision as should encourage them to speak with all boldness, crouching to no man for their morsel of bread, nor tempted to lick the hand that feeds them;—such a provision as should prevent the meanness of their condition from prejudicing the force of their reasoning, or give occasion to a high-minded hearer to accuse their plain speech of unmannerly presumption. Surely, until we can find such a church upon earth, in all her members, and in all the successive generations of her members, as can be true to the image of our Lord, it is a vision indeed to reject all adventitious support, such as her condition may require, and to say

with the great puritan poet, that she should be content, as ~~he was~~, "to ride upon an ass."¹ It is needless to add, that the friars at length became as rottenness to the bones of the Roman catholic church; that, by the time of Erasmus and Luther, they were the butt at which every dissolute idler, on every tavern bench, discharged his shaft, hitting the establishment, and religion itself, through their sides; that they were exhibited in pot-house pictures as foxes preaching, with the neck of a stolen goose peeping out of the hood behind; as wolves giving absolution, with a sheep muffled up in their cloaks; as apes sitting by a sick man's bed, with a crucifix in one hand, and with the other in the sufferer's fob.² Still the disaffection which this ridicule both indicated and promoted, was in some degree neutralised. There was something, after all, in the constitution of such an order as the friars, which gratified the feelings of the people, and which led to their continued toleration, if not to their aggrandisement. They were, for the most part, men of themselves; they were the democratic portion of the church. It no doubt flattered the

¹ Milton, l. 80. *Prose Works*. Burnet's *Bishop Jewel* argues the question more practically than Milton; and, allowing that there are many who would teach Christ for Christ's sake, looks onward to posterity, and asks of fathers, whether their own zeal will cause them to "keep their children at school until four and twenty years old, at their own charges, that in the end they may live in glorious poverty? that they may live poorly and unkindly, like prophets and apostles?" and he foretells that the event would be a lapse into ignorance. — *Serm. on Ps. lxxix. 9.*

² Erasmus. *Colloq. Franciscani.*

vanity of the peasant or mechanic, to see his own flesh and blood bearding the ~~first~~ ^{first} ~~born~~ of Egypt with whom he was brought into contact, or rather collision, in the members of the old and orthodox abbeys; nor would it be less grateful, perhaps, to an unlettered man to hear the *clerk* of his own name, and of his own breeding, starting and maintaining with vast pertinacity theological subtleties, which had little other merit, to be sure, than that of being in opposition to received opinions, and an assertion of the right of every man to think for himself, however ill he might be qualified for doing so to advantage.

Then, again, the pope was a tower of strength to the mendicant orders. They were the men of his right hand; and it may be observed, that when the Reformation came on, which was, amidst other and nobler interests concerned, a struggle in the first instance between the king and the pope for the mastery, the smaller monasteries (which were those of the friars) were the first confiscated by Henry; for he considered them the barracks from which his ~~most~~ ^{most} inveterate enemies issued to the contest, prepared to maintain the cause of their sovereign lord the pope against any and every antagonist. Lastly, it is not to be forgotten, that the cloak of the friar was the refuge for a class of men who would now be supported by parish relief; and though in both cases the idle might often be enabled hereby to enter into the labours of others, yet often again assistance would be thus administered to the blameless sufferer, and the load of life on the whole be lightened to the poor.

REFORMATION IN ENGLAND.

Such were some of the circumstances that still upheld the mendicants even in the days of their degeneracy, when the spirit was gone that had urged them indeed to enthusiastic extravagances and puerile superstitions, but which was respected because it was thought to be sincere ; and when little remained behind but a *caput mortuum* of unmeaning forms of devotion, and crafty contrivances for gain.

CHAPTER III.

PROGRESS OF GRIEVANCES UNDER THE NORMAN PRINCES. — PAPAL INTERFERENCE. — LEGATES. — COLLISION OF ROMAN AND ENGLISH FORMS OF LAW. — INCONVENIENCES ATTENDING IT.

It has been already observed that the distance of England from Italy, which had helped to deliver our borders from the political tyranny of imperial Rome, served also to protect the liberties of our church from the spiritual thralldom of papal Rome. The inhabitants of this island, entirely cut off from the rest of the world, were happily abandoned to their own devices. They were themselves the best judges of their own wants, and of the institutions which were suited to their own habits and circumstances; and though some time might elapse whilst they were thus groping about their way, which might have been saved by accepting foreign guidance, and though some rude traces of their slow and tentative progress towards their end might even afterwards appear in the results of their labours, still it was most desirable in the establishment of a church that it should gradually adapt itself in its growth and formation to the wants, the wishes, and the actual condition of the country. The least of all seeds was then most likely to become

the greatest of trees, when it was left to thrive alone (*occulto velut arbor ævo*); when its roots were quietly suffered to feel for the soil that fed them best, and its branches to stretch out their arms towards the quarter of the heavens which proved the most genial. The spirit of Christianity itself, at its first appearance, invited this forbearance on the part of those amongst whom it came, not meddling bodily with the civil or political rights of the nations it visited, and leaving their laws and forms of government, in their letter at least, just what it found them.

Thus in England the church and state for a long time grew up together, the pope occasionally interfering, though generally on invitation, and scarcely ever in a manner to disturb the harmony of the system. In Saxon times, we find the prelate and the king friends and fellow-workers together;—the one teaching the people, the other taking an interest in his office, and making provision for its permanent continuance. The same good understanding which subsisted between the bishop and the sovereign, subsisted also between the priest and the people: here, again, the one communicated a knowledge of God's laws to the inhabitants of his parsonage, the other encouraged the good work, and secured a similar benefit to his estate for ever by a fixed endowment; for in those days there was a belief that the foundations of a state were best laid in religion, and that persons were better subjects and better citizens in proportion as they were better men. Did difficulties present themselves in questions ecclesiastical; were obstacles to be

removed, or improvements to be made, or observances to be enforced, the nation had that within itself which usually supplied the remedy. Matters were transacted within the four seas. Civil interpositions, *e. g.* whether of the king or the great council, protected the persons and estates of the clergy, determined the union or dissolution of dioceses, directed the recovery of tithes, defined and punished sacrilege, prescribed and limited the right of sanctuary, insisted upon the observance of the Sabbath, and fined for the contempt of it.¹ Were the laws to be administered? Still there was the same intimate union maintained between clerical and secular interests. The bishop or his deputy (the *missus episcopi*) presided with the alderman in the county court, with the cent-grave in the hundred, with the town-reeve in the borough, with the steward of the manor in each parish; and judicial decisions which thus proceeded from the temporal and spiritual authorities combined were received with a respect which neither party could have secured for them, if acting alone.² Meanwhile all collision of church and state was avoided, and a wholehearted sympathy sprung up between them as they mutually shed an influence on each other. William, however, was jealous of the clergy, and it must be confessed that Dunstan had not done much to make them find favour in the eyes of a

¹ *Leges Inæ*, 1. *Aluredi*, 23, 24. *Edmundi*, 57. *Edgari*, 62. *Bede's Eccl. Hist.* 178. 291. See also Sharon Turner's *Anglo-Saxons*, iii. 248. *et seq.*

² *Essay upon the Government of the Church of England*, by George Reynolds, 27.

high-spirited monarch. Accordingly, a measure which he had already adopted in his Norman dominions he extended to England, and separated the civil and ecclesiastical courts. The religious consequences of this innovation were the reverse of what was intended; but its direct effect was to withdraw considerable power from the hands of the bishop; to diminish his income by the fines which fell to his share; and to withhold from him the opportunity of appearing to advantage before the people, who could not fail of drawing a comparison between him and the secular judges who sat with him; between the man of learning and the men of arms.¹ It was not till the end of the reign of Henry I. that the change began to make itself felt. Now, however, the clergy, no longer supported by the crown in the same degree as before, nor making common cause with the nobles, were unable to uphold the independence of the national church against the pope, who was waxing stronger every day; for he was even then no indifferent spectator of the affairs of nations, but was still on the watch ready to profit by the mistakes of others. Already he had made several unsuccessful attempts on the liberties of England. The case of Bishop Wilfrid was briefly alluded to in the first chapter. He was ejected from his see by Egfrid King of Northumbria; he carried his complaints to Rome; it was the judgment of Pope Agatho in council that he had been unjustly deprived. After a while he returned to England and resumed his

episcopal functions; but it was at the request of King Aldfrid, who had in the mean time succeeded Ecgfrid. This proves something; but the sequel of the story proves more. Wilfrid offends again — is again deprived; again appeals to Rome; and presents himself together with his accusers before Pope John, the successor of Agatho. Once more the decision is in favour of the bishop; and the pope on this occasion writes to the two kings, Ethelred and Aldfrid, to re-install him in his see, from which, it was his opinion, he had been unlawfully expelled. Ethelred (who had now abdicated in favour of Cenred and had retired to a monastery) stood his friend, and advised compliance with the wishes of the pope; but *Aldfrid scorned to receive him*¹, and if we are to believe the bishop's biographer, expressed in no very measured terms his contempt for papal rescripts.² But it cost him dear; his death following shortly after, which Bede insinuates was a judgment upon him for this act of contumacy.³ This was about the year 704. Again, there exists a letter addressed to Pope Leo III., by the bishops and clergy of England, protesting against the necessity of the metropolitan spending his labour in travelling to Rome for the pall, or his money in purchasing it, when the early records of the church went to prove that some archbishops had not received it at all, and that none had bought it at a price; happy times, they add, in which the apostolic see did not expose itself to the

¹ Bede's Eccl. Hist. 447.

² Reynolds, 31.

³ Bede, 447.

reproach which St. Peter cast on Simon, "Thy money perish with thee."¹ This was about the year 798. The pope, therefore, was ready to rush in with the first opportunity, and at length one presented itself. William requested the assistance of Rome to remodel the English church after the great Norman revolution; his request, we may be sure, was readily complied with. Certain cardinal priests are despatched, who endeavour to approximate Rome and Canterbury, by preaching on behalf of the pope, the pall, personal homage to the apostolic see, and the right of investiture to bishoprics; and though efforts are made to saddle upon England a permanent representative of the pope, under the title of Legate (a name perhaps derived from the military officer whom the Roman emperors used to send out to govern a province), this latter proposal is for the present aside. In some of the other measures they appear to have sped better; for we may observe that on the demise of each archbishop successively (with few exceptions) there now occurs a memorandum of a vacancy in the see of twelve months or more, during which it is reasonable to suppose that the metropolitan elect was making application to Rome personally, or by proxy, for confirmation of his appointment and peaceable possession of the mitre.² Sometimes this interval is protracted to several years, the right of investiture being in such cases most likely a bone of contention between the king and the pope, and the subject not

¹ Angl. Sacr. i. 161.

² Angl. Sacr. i. 6. et seq.

admitting of a more speedy adjustment. Indeed, this was a question of great intricacy; one, in which the most dispassionate lookers on must have found it difficult to strike a balance between the evil and the good. If, on the one hand, the pope was permitted to present to the sees and abbeys of England, he would fill the country, perhaps with foreigners, certainly with creatures of his own, and then what was to become of the independence of the national church? On the other hand, if the king presented, rapacious as the early Norman monarchs were, he might make a profit of his privilege, put up the sacred offices to auction, as King Rufus actually did¹; or retain in his own hands, as that same tyrant was found to have done at the day of his death, an archbishopric of Canterbury, the bishoprics of Winchester and Salisbury, together with a dozen good abbeys, and then what was to become of the very existence of the national church?² It was probably these latter considerations that induced Archbishop Anselm, a sincere friend and well-wisher, as it should seem, to his church, to throw it more actually into the hands of the pope, by procuring from him an injunction that no prelate, abbot, or priest, should receive investiture of any dignity ecclesiastical whatsoever from a layman. King Henry, perhaps unwilling to risk a rupture at one and the same time with his church at home, with a strong faction of his nobles who supported it, and gave evidence of their intention to do so with spirit by the oath they subsequently

¹ Angl. Sacr. i. 6.² Angl. Sacr. i. 372.

imposed upon Stephen¹, and with the papal power now grown formidable, gave way, and granted to the cathedrals and collegiate churches of his realm license to elect any of their own body into abbey or bishopric, thereby waving a right which by an act of usurpation the kings had assumed since *the conquest*, of conferring mitres and monasteries on whom they would.² Thus the authority of the Saxon synod, in which the bishops and clergy combined with the king for ecclesiastical elections, was in some measure restored, and though certainly less independent and absolute than formerly³, it was something that it had again a voice: at present, it should appear, that the theory of ecclesiastical appointments was this, the chapters elected, the king approved, the pope confirmed the choice.⁴ But there were here too many parties having too many conflicting interests to admit of perpetual harmony. Accordingly the struggle begins; and now the pope has his right of investiture; and now the king cripples it by suspending the temporalities of the see during its vacancy, and leaving his holiness nothing to present unto but the bare episcopal office⁵; and now he accepts the king's candidate to the rejection of him whom the chapter had unanimously chosen⁶; and now again he seems to take upon himself the sole responsibility of the appointment on the principle that "my name is Leo."⁷ On the whole, the strife

¹ Angl. Sacr. i. 284.

² Angl. Sacr. i. 274.

³ Bede's Eccl. Hist. 352. 400.

⁴ Angl. Sacr. i. 6. 71.

⁵ Angl. Sacr. i. 44. 48.

⁶ Angl. Sacr. i. 42.

⁷ Angl. Sacr. i. 43.

issued out as it was natural it should, in the despot; the pope prevailed; his legate (for by the end of the reign of Henry I. a legate had established a right of road into England) was ever upon the watch; and the opposition of the national clergy, which was considerable, to the advances of this active emissary, was taken off by identifying the legate with the Archbishop of Canterbury himself. This was a master-stroke of policy; it at once removed the leader of the insurgents, and grafting the unfounded pretensions of the legate on the acknowledged rights of the archbishop, made him in his latter character, the best of stalking horses for papal encroachments. When the high spirit of the clergy would have tempted them to resist him in one capacity, their sense of what was due to him in his other capacity kept them in check; to abstract the legate from the metropolitan was impossible; the frictions of the two were in constant conflict; and it must have been felt that there was a drag on the church which was pulling it in pieces. He, however, as the pope's representative, continued to convene provincial synods and preside in them; to exercise all manner of jurisdiction; to withdraw from the cognisance of parliament ecclesiastical grievances; to interfere with the diocesan courts, and excite the just jealousy of the bishops by supplanting them in some of their most ancient and indisputable rights. Questions touching the probate of wills, administrations, appeals, visitations, and the like, afforded but too much opportunity for collision, and the church was scandalised by a contest,

rather for the fees than for the faith.¹ Thus did the establishment suffer both from within and from without: from within, by the decay of all discipline; from without, by the forfeiture of all respect.

Nor was this all. Nothing contributes so much to disgust the public mind with the existing order of things as the faulty administration of justice. Let the people have justice purely, unexpensively, and expeditiously administered, and what chiefly concerns them in the government of a country is obtained. "I crave the law," is the demand of any stout-hearted nation, and having gained this object, they are at peace. Now the ancient county-court was simple and satisfactory in its practice, — it was the natural growth of the soil; suited to the wants of Englishmen, and consecrated by immemorial usage. The judiciary system introduced by the pope, on the other hand, into the diocesan courts, of which rescripts from Rome and (subsequently when the books of the civil law had been discovered) the old Roman jurisprudence were the basis, was tedious, costly, and, what was perhaps worse than all, novel.² Even of those who had to administer it, there were some who did it reluctantly; strove to evade it, and adopted the trial by jury instead of the subtleties of the Roman law; but these innovations were accounted heretical, and prohibitions were issued against Grosthead, Bishop of Lincoln, and others, who had the courage or temerity to attempt them.³ Still it was one thing

¹ Reynolds, 41. 48. 49.

² Reynolds, 38.

³ Reynolds, 36.

to silence, and another to satisfy. Much inconvenience was felt by the people in consequence of "the law's delay," and a proportionate desire was created for a reformation of the system. The rolls of parliament, from Edward III. to Henry VIII., present numerous complaints to the Commons on the difficulties attending the probate of wills; and such there well might be, when, in addition to the parties already mentioned, the bishop and the legate, each of whom asserted his own exclusive right of probate, and referred his cause to the pope, a third party stepped in, under the title of *legatus a latere*, or special legate, who, in his turn, contested the privileges of the *legatus natus*, and urged his own superior claim to the cognisance of all testamentary matters.¹ Nor were the grievances touching property more onerous than those which regarded domestic relationship. The regulations of marriage were intricate and vexatious: whilst it was maintained to be in itself a sacrament, and so indissoluble, the prohibited degrees were studiously multiplied, and thereby a pretence was furnished for a dissolution whenever it should be the pope's pleasure to pronounce it. Thus did he hold in his hand, and determine by his legate, or by the dean of the arches, the legate's deputy, the legitimacy of children, and the succession of families; separating those whom no man had a right to put asunder, and giving his sanction to unions which nature and Scripture forbade.

The progress of a cause, slow, of necessity by

¹ Reynolds, 66.

reason of the forms of the court, and the contradictions of the canons, was still further and more seriously impeded by appeals. By these, episcopal decisions were set at nought; and the more effectually as the court of the arches was invested with the power of suspending the process of the ordinary till the pope's answer should be received, and often, no-doubt, till one or both of the litigants would be ready to exclaim with King Henry, whose divorce presents, in its seven years' details, a splendid example of the grievances under which numbers of his subjects were suffering, with more right on their side, —

I abhor
This dilatory sloth and tricks of Rome."

It would be a long labour, and one, perhaps, of no great interest to the majority of our readers after all, to follow out this branch of our subject in all its extent. Suffice it, however, not to have passed over in silence so fruitful a source of popular discontent as abuses in the administration of the law—abuses which could not fail of alienating multitudes from a church with which they were identified. It is not, perhaps, a circumstance less worthy of notice from being often overlooked; and whilst the more obvious evils which clamorously demanded redress are set forth to the full, one which touched men in their property, their affections,—which met them in the affairs of "this working-day world" at every turn,—is noticed casually, or not at all.

There may be those, indeed, who think that to dwell at so much length on the secondary and

more disgraceful causes of the Reformation, is to detract from the character of that great event, and to tarnish its lustre, but they who regard God's enemies as his instruments will not so account of it. They will see in the course given to those beggarly elements the same superintending hand that wrought the nourishment of Jacob's household out of the sin of Jacob's sons; so that whilst they wickedly sold Joseph to the Ishmaelites, God mercifully made it for good; sending him before them, by this means, to preserve them a posterity in the earth, and to save their lives by a great deliverance. They will see in it the same power at work that shaped the cruel decree of Pharaoh for the children to be cast into the river, into an easy provision for bringing up Moses in the royal household, and thus fitting him to be the teacher and leader of Israel, by introducing him into all the wisdom of the Egyptians. They will see in it the same that achieved the salvation of the world itself, by Caiaphas who declared that it was expedient for one man to die for the people, and by the wretches that cried, "Crucify him! crucify him!"

CHAPTER IV.

MONASTERIES.—THEIR USURPATION OF THE RIGHTS OF THE CLERGY.—IMPROPRIATIONS.—EVILS OF THE SYSTEM.

WITH the causes already enumerated as those which worked the downfall of the Roman Catholic church, there conspired the ignorance and immoral lives of the clergy. A system of celibacy upon compulsion was sure to produce a system of profligacy. Yet the disgusting catalogue of offences alleged against the regulars, by the visitors of the monasteries, ought, perhaps, to be received with some caution. The commissioners were not unprejudiced judges. They knew full well, that the king, their master, was determined on the dissolution of the religious houses, and that, at all events, a quarrel was to be picked. Bad enough those houses probably were, but had they been better, their doom was sealed. The preamble of the act for dissolving the smaller ones on pretence of their corruption, proclaims that the greater were spared as being regular, devout, and praiseworthy; yet we know what followed.¹ The nunnery of Godstow, in Oxfordshire, was actually

¹ 27 Hen. 6. c. 23. Stat. of the Realm, iii, 576.

reported as exemplary; it was the school to which all the young gentlewomen of the country resorted. Their friends pleaded with the king to spare it, the inquisitors seconded their petition, — but they obtained for it no other boon than that it should be eaten up last. Voluntary confessions of guilt, which accompanied the surrender of the abbeys, are the mere suicidal confessions of a man upon the wheel, proof of nothing but of the pain or the hope which extorted them. The monks found that they could not save their ship, and, therefore, they compromised, by stripping themselves naked, and trying for a plank. Had they stood upon their own innocence, they would have condemned the king, and still lost their estates; did they allow their guilt, they screened his rapacity, and received a see, a living or a pension. The courtiers were interested in swelling the cry that such men were not fit to live. They, like the visiters, themselves hoped for a share of the golden eggs when they should have succeeded in killing the hen. “Wherefore this waste?” was their pretence; but they carried a bag of their own, which was to be filled out of their neighbour’s pocket; and, whatever might be the sin of sacrilege, “tithe corn,” thought they, “makes very good bread.” Here is no attempt or desire to defend these miserable monks in the teeth of damning facts, — and some such, no doubt, there were to testify against very many of the monastic abuses, — but it is nothing but justice, and the practice of every equitable court, to weigh the characters and prejudices, and private interests of the witnesses,

when they would swear away a man's life, substance, and good name; and, in the present instance, it is fair to adopt the same rule, were it only out of consideration to the many sincere, and humble, and righteous servants of God, that those religious houses contained within their walls, even in the midst of an adulterous and sinful generation; the faithful among the faithless; the many who had fled thither for shelter from the sorrows of life; the ambitious, with blighted hopes and a broken spirit; the gay, with the experience of the wise man that all under the sun was vanity; the forlorn, whom the world had abandoned, and left to drift upon the rocks; the disappointed, whose course of true love might not have run smooth; these, and a thousand other malignant influences, contributed their victims to those "populous solitudes;" persons having now no other desire than to pass the time of their sojourning here in piety, in privacy, and in peace. This is a class to which it is impossible to refuse our sympathy, and whom it would be ungenerous and unjust to confound with the swarm of lazy, sensual, unlettered drones among whom it was their unhappy lot to live, and whom the shock of the Reformation dispersed. Exemption from episcopal visitation, and consequently from any inspection whatever, was the beginning of the evil. This privilege of the monasteries proved their poison: it was a short-sighted policy of the pope to hide them from the eye of the secular clergy, whose jealousy would have acted as a wholesome stimulant to the detection and cor-

rection of abuses. But the seculars he systematically slighted, and his iniquity eventually found him out. Then, again, came upon them an evil spirit which led them to grasp at the possession of all the benefices in the country. This was another effort to depress the working clergy, which the pope encouraged, but which, like the former, was, in the end, most injurious to his own authority, by bringing the clergy into contempt, and opening the eyes of the people to the covetousness of the monks. The system of *impropriations*, which began with William the Conqueror, grew so rapidly that, in the course of three centuries, more than a third part of the benefices in England became such¹, and those the richest, for the whiter the cow the surer was it to go to the altar, and by the time of the Reformation, there was added another third.² An attempt was made by the legislature to stay the evil, and the statute of mortmain was passed in the reign of Edward I., whereby it was enacted, that "no person, religious or other, should presume to buy or sell, or under any colour of donation, lease, or other title, to receive any lands or tenements, or by any act of invention to appropriate them, under pain of forfeiture of them."³ But the statute was evaded by royal dispensations, and the mischief grew. Even the pope himself took alarm (*paret ipse sacerdos*); and Alexander, at the end of the twelfth century, writes to the Bishop of Worcester to admit no man to a vicarage on presentation of the monks, till they had

¹ Kennett on Improvements, 25.

² Ibid. 405.

³ Ibid. 97.

assigned him, on the instant, such a portion of income as would suffice for the episcopal dues, and for the competent maintenance of the minister¹; but this decree they set at nought by not presenting at all, either serving the churches by stipendiary curates, or (which was the readier way) leaving them altogether unserved.² By-and-by the example of the monasteries was followed by the chantries, colleges, hospitals, and nunneries; these, in their turn, learned the art of procuring impropriations³: nay, even corporations, transforming themselves, by a legal fiction, into religious societies, did the same; for before King Henry VIII. there seems to have been no precedent in England for a mere layman to be an impropriator.⁴ The monks, however, had peculiar facilities for the accumulation of livings. Their influence with some neighbouring lord of a manor would often win him to make over the church on his estate, and the tithes with which it might be endowed, to their own abbey; they, meanwhile, undertaking to provide for the fulfilment of the ecclesiastical duties belonging to it. Then, again, if they could not beg they could buy, often the parish itself, as well as the benefice; or, where the purchase was more circumscribed, the pope, ever their friend, would sometimes grant them the privilege of non-payment of tithes to the extent of such estate, to the great injury of the clergyman, when it happened to be considerable.

¹ Ryves's *Poore Vicar's Plea*, 15.

² *Ibid.* 7.

³ *Ibid.* 21.

⁴ Kennett, 95.

Thus rectories were reduced to vicarages; the greater tithes going to the abbey-fund, the small tithes left as a miserable stipend (often not more than a sixteenth part of the revenue of the benefice¹) to the minister, who took the monk's abouring oar under the title of *vicarius*. Thus originated that divorce between the property of the parish church and the minister of it, which continues in most instances of vicarages to this day; and thus it came to pass that town livings (contrary to all reason) are at present, of all others, the poorest, less than the usual pittance of endowment having been left to them by the considerate monks, who reckoned, and perhaps rightly reckoned, in the days when masses were said, that a large population would supply by fees alone an adequate provision for the vicar. Meanwhile, the people were disgusted with this gross and cruel invasion of the rights of their pastors; and the representatives of the monasteries read themselves in amidst reproaches loud and deep, of the by-standers.² But they were not thin-skinned. They prepared, however, a sop for Cerberus, by exacting with little rigour the small tithes, or, in some cases, by accepting an easy composition instead of them; hoping, by such *modus (decimandi)* to purchase the more cheerful and prompt payment of the great tithes, which was their affair; and not at all uneasy because the propitiation happened to be made at the vicar's expense.³ Their only remaining con-

¹ Ryves's Poore Vicar's Plea, 145.

² Monast. Anglic. i. 658.

³ Kennett, 59.

cern was to find some "Sir Johns" (as the poor clergy were called before the Reformation), sometimes with an honourable adjunct of "lack-Latin¹," or "amble-matins²," or "babbling Sir Johns³," or "blind Sir Johns⁴," as it might be, who were just qualified, according to the letter of the law, to stand in the gap; mass-priests, who could read their breviaries, and no more; for in those days men seem to have received ordination without any adequate examination either as to learning or character⁵ — persons of the lowest of the people, with all the gross habits of the class from which they sprung; loiterers on the ale-house bench⁶; dicers; scarce able to say by rote their Pater-noster, often actually unable to repeat the commandments⁷; divines every way fitted to provoke the 75th canon, which was, no doubt, in the first instance, levelled against them.⁸ Such were the ministers to whom was consigned a very large proportion of the parishes of England before the Reformation; with what effect, the ignorance, the superstition, the vices which then spread themselves

¹ Strype's Annals, 177. Latimer's Sermons, ii. 243.

² Strype's Annals, 181.

³ Wordsworth's Eccles. Biog. i. 265. note.

⁴ Jewel's Sermon on Haggai, i. 2.

⁵ See Dean Colet's Sermon in Burnet's Reform. iii. 28. fol. The original Latin sermon is given in the appendix to Knight's Life of Colet. The passage alluded to is in p. 281.

⁶ Strype's Cranmer, 456.

⁷ Ibid. 217, 218.

⁸ Colet's Sermon, printed in 1511, speaks of laws, — *quæ prohibent ne clericus sit publicus lusor*; and of laws, *quæ prohibent clericis frequentare tabernæ*, 281.

over the whole country, sufficiently testify. A feature or two of the times, such as have been preserved to us, are here offered to the reader, not, to be sure, always drawn by a very friendly hand, but still, in all probability, tolerably faithful. The prayers of the church, being in Latin, tended little or nothing to edification. Preaching there was scarce any. Quarterly sermons appear to have been prescribed to the clergy, but not to have been insisted upon; for though mass was on no account left unsaid for a single Sunday, sermons might be omitted for twenty Sundays together, and nobody be blamed.¹ The unpreaching prelate is honest Latimer's by-word. Indeed, as the Reformation approached, as the stirring of the foundations began to make itself felt, to be a preacher was to be suspected of being a heretic.² The friars, to be sure, were not dumb dogs, but they barked to little purpose, in a manner to prove rather that they were hungry than watchful; their discourses having for their object rather to fill their own wallets than satisfy their hearers' wants, and if not occupied with uncharitable invectives against other ecclesiastics, a tissue of fables and old wives' tales.³ Catechising, in the protestant sense of the term, was unknown or unpractised. When, indeed, it was perceived how powerful a weapon it was in the hands of the Reformers, steps were taken at the council of Trent for putting forth what was called a catechism. But the Trent catechism was composed avowedly for the in-

¹ Latimer's Sermons, i. 182.

² Ibid. 87.

³ Burnet's Hist. of Reformation, i. 916. 1st ed. fol.

struction of the parish priests, not for the use of children, to whom it was not at all adapted; and, after all, the gross ignorance of the former must have made it as dead letter to most of them; utterly unintelligible so long as it remained in the learned language in which it was written, and if translated, (as it was, into Italian, French, German, and Polish, whether into English we know not) still containing too much special pleading, too obvious an anxiety for secular interests, too manifest an apprehension that the "craft was in danger," too much doubtful or ridiculous theology, to stand against the strong blows of the men of the new learning. The Church Catechism, on the other hand, writ in our own mother tongue, brief, and, on the whole, of admirable simplicity; a manual, which, elementary as it may be thought, no competent judge can examine without seeing that its authors must have been men mighty in those Scriptures, whereof, indeed, it is the essence, most patiently investigated, and most skilfully and scrupulously expressed; this wrought so effectually, that "now" (says an authority of the second year of Elizabeth, quoted by Strype) "a young child of ten years old can tell more of his duty towards God and man than a man of their bringing up can do in fifty or eighty years."¹ Nay, of the Scriptures even the more learned clergy knew very little, the universities being taken up with popes' laws and schoolmen. Indeed, it was difficult to meet with a copy of the Bible, or of any

¹ Strype's Annals. 87.

other profitable book of divinity in these seats of learning, so successfully had the friars bought them all up; and students, we are told, in the reign of Edward III. actually withdrew from them in consequence, and returned to their own homes¹; nor does the study of the Scriptures appear to have had a chance against Scotus and Aquinas till dean Colet established it at Oxford; and, about the same time, George Schæfer, at Cambridge, by lectures on the books of Holy Writ.² The people at large, if possible, fared worse. They were debarred from all knowledge of their Bibles, either by the language in which they were written (for copies of Wickliffe's translation were scarce), or, if not, by the price at which they were sold; the cost of Wickliffe's New Testament, in the beginning of the fifteenth century, being four marks and forty pence, a sum equal to 2*l.* 16*s.* 3*d.* of present money.³ Thus the multitude knew just so much of Scripture history as the miracle plays taught them, and little more. To these burlesque and indecent caricatures of Holy Writ (though it is fair to say not so intended) the idle and dissipated were the first to resort, as to fairs and revels, with which festivities, indeed, they ranked, so that, had they been better worth attention, it is probable that

¹ Strype's *Cranmer*, 169. Fox's *Acts and Mon.* i. 538. Ed. 1631-32. Wordsworth's *Ecccl. Biog.* i. 287.

² Wordsworth's *Ecccl. Biog.* i. 306. Knight's *Life of Dean Colet*, 47. 53. 56. Erasmus supported by his authority the new system of theology, and defended his friend Colet at Cambridge.

³ *Ecccl. Biog.* i. 286. note.

an attendance upon them would not have conduced much to edification. The Sabbath was rather a day of sports and pastimes than of devotion and instruction — of dancing, shooting with the bow, and practising with the buckler¹; nor were these, it may be well imagined, the most culpable of its occupations. The churches were profaned. In the top of one of the pinnacles of St. Paul's in London was Lollard's tower, the prison, and often the grave of the saints. In the *arches* of the same cathedral were the ecclesiastical courts, of which the balance was not always the balance of the sanctuary, though in the sanctuary it was held. In the spacious *nave* was the exchange for the merchants (for Sir Thomas Gresham had not yet lived to remove the reproach), and the scene of the brawlings of the horse-fair.² Payments of money were made at the *font*; and the *crypt*, or under-ground chapel, in which the early mass was said, was the trysting-place of the nightly revellers of either sex.³ Nor were such abuses as these confined to London. The house of God, as it should seem from the homily "On the right

¹ Latimer's Sermons, i. 177.

² Shakspeare, Second Part of Henry IV. act i. scene 2,

Fal. Where's Bardolph?

"Fal. He's gone into Smithfield to buy your worship a horse.

"Fal. I bought him in *Paul's*, and he'll buy me a horse in Smithfield."

See also Strype's Annals, 227.

³ Ibid. 227. and Queen Elizabeth's "Proclamation made for the reverend usage of all churches and churchyards," given in Strype's Life of Grindal, 56.

"Use of the Church," was too generally the place of rendezvous for such as loved greetings in the market-place, had tales to tell, or business to transact; and the devotions of the day were suffered to drag on like Pharaoh's chariots with the wheels off, whilst many of the congregation were more profitably employed (as they thought) in the discussion of farm or merchandize, as they paced to and fro along its aisles. It is to these and similar acts of irreverence that the canons respect in the directions they give to churchwardens and questmen — directions which a change in the manners of the times has rendered obsolete and almost unintelligible¹; and it may be reasonably supposed, that in the ordering of our church ceremonies, and in the composition of our church service itself, the principle of fully and fervently occupying all who were within the walls in their devotions was studiously kept in sight by the reformers; and that the sacrifice of prayer and praise should no longer be considered the exclusive office of the priest, as it had been so much in papal times, the people looking on, but that every member should be called upon at intervals, and those of short and frequent recurrence, the whole service through, to testify, by lifting up his voice in confession or response, that he, too, had a lively interest in the common work before them, "of besetting God, as it were, round (so the quaint old Fuller expresses it), and not suffering him to depart till he had blessed them — *hæc vis grata Deo.*" The saints'

¹ See Canons, xviii. xix.

days and holidays, again, were numerous, even to the hinderance of a harvest, and to the certain and perpetual encouragement of riot and revelry throughout the country.¹ Taverns and ale-houses, little better than brothels, with their dishonest games of cards, dice, backgammon, tennis, foot-ball, quoits, drained the pockets of their votaries, and sent them to rob on the highway. So, says Sir Thomas More, who might, perhaps, have excepted the more athletic sports here enumerated from his anathema, and thereby have rendered it more effective.² The due punishment of the culprits was rendered difficult by the places of refuge afforded them in the precincts of religious houses, which were the thieves' paradise³; and though felons of all kinds could here claim sanctuary, even for life, so that they would actually sally forth by night to rob or slay, and return before day-break to their asylum within the rules with impunity, yet to the poor persecuted Lollard was the gate of mercy closed, and he might be legally pursued even unto the horns of the altar.⁴ The friar, meanwhile, went on with his mumpsimus. His most constant hearers (so profitable was his teaching) were at a loss to distinguish between the deadly sins and the ten commandments⁵; of which latter, indeed, as of the articles of the belief in English, the people were entirely ignorant, being wholly given to superstitions.⁶ They

¹ Strype's *Cranmer*, 56. and *Latimer*.

² *Utopia*, ed. 24mo. 73.

³ *Latimer's Serm.* i. 176.

⁴ *Wordsworth's Eccl. Biog.* i. 271.

⁵ *Latimer*, ii. 189.

⁶ *Eccl. Biog.* i. 166.

hastened to the churches for holy water, of which the devil was said to be afraid, before a thunder-storm¹; fled to St. Rooke in time of pestilence; in an ague, to St. Fernel, or master John Shorne; being Welshmen, and disposed to take a purse, they besought the help of Darvel Gathorne; if a wife were weary of her husband, she betook herself to St. Uncumber.² They repaired to the wise woman to recover what they had lost, or to be recruited from a sickness; and addicted themselves with all their might to magic, sorcery, charms, and the black art.³ The grossest pretensions which indulgences could advance were swallowed, and not strained at. Relics, carrying imposture on their very face, ("lies," in the language of Scripture,) were kissed with pious credulity. Pilgrimages were undertaken in the spirit of the company in the Canterbury Tales, or of Ogygius in his journey to our lady of Walsingham⁴; and yet were reckoned acts that would be accounted to the parties for righteousness: and, whilst no man brought his gift to the altar of his Saviour in Canterbury cathedral throughout a whole year, offerings were made at the shrine of St. Thomas à Becket in the same place, and during the same period, to the amount of nearly a thousand pounds.

No wonder that in these ages of darkness doctrines not found in the word of God, but of

¹ Latimer, ii. 165.

² Eccl. Biog. i. 166.

³ Latimer's Sermon ii. 24. 199.

⁴ Erasmus, *Peregrinatio Religionis Ergo*.

which we have seen that the germ existed even in the Saxon church, should have shot up with vigour like the gourd of Jonah in the night ; or that, in the absence of Scripture to speak for itself, the religion of Rome (as Latimer observes) should have passed for it.¹

¹ Latimer, Sermon. ii. 45.

CHAPTER V.

EARLY REFORMERS. — WALDENSES. — WICKLIFFE. —
LOLLARDS.

MEANWHILE a little leaven was at work, which served still to keep a better faith alive ; a little salt of the earth, which prevented the great carcass of human nature from offending the nostrils of its Creator. The Almighty has been ever wont to make such provision for the continuance of sound doctrine. Whilst all flesh was corrupting its way, still a household or two were left to keep his name from perishing, and to rally the true religion again,—an Ends, an Enoch, or a Noah. When idolatry had once more spread itself over the world, almost to the extinction of the knowledge of the Most High, a few chosen vessels were left for the preservation of it still,—an Abraham, a Lot, a Melchizedec, a Job. Generations rolled on, and God thought fit to act on a greater scale, but still on the same principle ; and the Israelites were separated from mankind as a peculiar people, as the depositaries of the creed of man ; and their fortunes were so shaped as to occasion their dispersion amongst the Gentiles, with the Bible in their hearts and hands, and thus were they made the channels through which the will and works of God were

communicated to those who would otherwise have sat in darkness ; and to this origin, perhaps, rather than to the unassisted efforts of natural reason, is to be referred the more sublime part of the philosophy of the heathens.¹

So it was, in a degree, during the times of papal ignorance ; for though to the question, which the Romanists taught every priest that could scarce read his breviary to ask, "Where was the religion of protestants before Luther?" it was sufficient to say, as it was said, "In the Bible ;" still, even in the darkest times, it had many faithful witnesses to produce besides, and both in individuals and in whole congregations might even then be read the eloquent chapters of the good man's life. Thus, whilst the pope was grasping at universal power, and the monks were busy in seconding his efforts, and councils were giving authority to abuses both doctrinal and practical, on which his usurpation was grafting itself, and wars were waged between the several ecclesiastical orders, to the ruin of that which is the key-stone of the gospel, *charity*, and ignorance was becoming more dense, and manners more profligate, there was abiding amongst the recesses of the Alps a race of hardy mountaineers, who held (as they still hold after ages of poverty and oppression) the essential articles of the reformed faith, and to whom it had been apparently derived from the apostles themselves :—Vaudois, Valenses, or Waldenses, was the name of this pri-

¹ See the very learned charge of Dr. Waterland upon "The Wisdom of the Ancients borrowed from Divine Revelation," viii. 1. *et seq.* Oxf.

mitive people, dwelling as they did, in the *valleys* of the Cottian Alps, the name which, though at first like that of Albigenes and Romanists, having a reference to the local habitation of the persons who bore it, eventually embraced a large and widely scattered sect which professed certain religious opinions, and on more occasions than one sealed them with their blood. For that they took their title or origin from Peter Waldo, the heretic of Lyons, as the catholics pretend, is not to be admitted. He was excommunicated by the archbishop of that place, in 1172, and is not mentioned before the year 1160, whereas there is evidence that the Vaudois existed as a distinct society at least half a century earlier; and it is probable that the *Subalpini* and *Paterines*, a more ancient name still, men who worshipped the God of their fathers after a manner which the church of Rome called heresy, were but the same Waldenses, under a prior designation. Certain it is, that no shadow of proof exists of Peter Waldo having ever set foot in Piedmont; and a substantial difference may be descried between his followers and the church of the Alps, that whilst the former assumed the functions of the clerical office without hesitation, the latter constantly and scrupulously insisted upon a regular call to the priesthood, and imposition of hands.¹ Indeed, the episcopal form of church government was faithfully preserved among them, till poverty, aggravated by a dreadful pestilence in the early part of the seventeenth

¹ See Allix's Churches of Piedmont, c. 24.

century, threw them ~~for~~ resources upon Switzerland, which very naturally sent them, together with clerical recruits, (for two only out of the thirteen barbes or pastors had been left alive,) her liturgy, her presbyterian constitution, and her cold and unattractive ritual.¹ Among many of their tenets to which their enemies bear witness, we find that they gave ~~no~~ credit to modern miracles, rejected extreme unction, held offerings for the dead as nothing worth, except to the priest, neglected the festivals, denied the doctrines of transubstantiation, purgatory, and invocation of saints, and held the church of Rome (not an uncommon opinion in the thirteenth century²) to be the woman in scarlet of the Revelations. From *La Nobla Leçon*, a certain poem of their own, of unsuspected authority and very ancient date, for it was written about the year 1100, we may further gather, in addition to the particulars already given, that the commandments were taught by them, not excepting that against idols, and the worship of the Trinity, though without a word in favour of the Virgin. Slanderous tongues would indeed "have done

¹ See Gilly's *Researches among the Vaudois*, 76., and his *Second Visit*, 219. It appears that the several liturgies of Geneva, Neufchâtel, and Lausanne are used at present; but that of Geneva by the majority of the pastors. On comparing the brief sketch of this service (given by Mr. Gilly as the one of La Torre) with the Geneva "Forme of Common Praiers, made by Master John Calvyne," we may conjecture that the latter is in a great measure retained.

² See Dante's *Purgatorio*, c. xvi. xxxii. Petrarc. Son 196.

them to death ;"—things which they knew not were wantonly and wickedly laid to their charge, many, of the same kind, urged in the same spirit, and with the same regard to consistency, as the charges objected to the first Christians by the heathens of old time. They were dissolute libertines, and they were ascetic precisians ; they used the Lord's Prayer only, and yet they prayed at greater or less length seven times a day ; they permitted laymen to consecrate the elements, and yet they had priests, and, as some said, three orders of priests ; they allowed the former also to receive confessions, yet they rejected the confessional ; they would have ecclesiastics supported by alms, and they denounced the mendicant orders as Satan's own invention ;—*non hæc satis inter se conveniunt*. Archbishop Usher has been at the pains to collect and compare the manifold accusations cast in their teeth, and makes it manifest that " the testimony agreeth not together."¹ Here, however, were many of the principal tenets of the reformed faith, long before the time of Luther :—in the fastnesses of these mountains (to use the language of bishop Jewel) were they found, even as it was in such places that the older prophets prophesied from the Spirit of God. The Vaudois extended themselves. They sent forth a colony to Calabria, which was basely and barbarously put to the sword, when the signs of the times foreboded a reformation in Italy, and struck the pope with " fear of change." A settlement so distant

¹ De Christianarum Ecclesiar. Successione et Statu. c. vi. § 19. 33.

could not affect England, or if so, very indirectly. But another division of the same people migrated to Bohemia; and the intercourse between England and that country in the time of Wickliffe was considerable. Natives of Bohemia were then students at Oxford¹; and Richard II. chose a Bohemian princess for his queen. The partiality which she herself (as indeed her nation in general) manifested for the writings of our early reformer is an indication of some sympathy between the parties. The good seed must have fallen on ground prepared to receive it, or it would not have shot up so vigorously; and it is probable that the early heresy of Bohemia might help to raise up a Wickliffe for England, as he paid the debt back by giving to Bohemia a Huss and a Jerome. Certain it is, that catholic writers of the greatest authority, in treating of the doctrines of Wickliffe, have considered him as adopting those of the Waldenses, by whatever means he had become acquainted with them; and the Vaudois to this day claim a fraternal feeling as due to themselves from England, on the same ground.² Mr. Wordsworth, whose "Ecclesiastical Sketches" are in general scarcely more remarkable for their poetry than for their historical accuracy, points at this connection in his Sonnet on the Waldenses:—

These who gave earliest notice, as the lark
Springs from the ground the morn to gratulate:
Who rather rose the day to antedate,
By striking out a solitary spark,
When all the world with midnight gloom was dark.

¹ Eccl. Biog. i. 99.

² See Mr. Gilly's Narrative, 78.

These harbingers of good, whom bitter hate
 In vain endeavoured to exterminate,
 Fell obloquy pursues with hideous bark ;
 But they desist not, and the sacred fire,
 Rekindled thus, from dens and savage woods
 Moves, handed on with never-ceasing care,
 Through courts, through camps, o'er liminary floods ,
 Nor licks the sea-girt isle a timely share
 Of the new flame, not suffered to expire."

Some, again, of the same¹ persecuted race repaired to Provence and Languedoc, where they were known by the name of Albigenes, or heretics of Albi (perhaps the parent stock of the present protestants in the south of France) ; and on being driven thence, as they were driven thither by the inquisition and the sword, sought shelter in the neighbouring district of Guienne, then in possession of the English, and thus possibly found a way for themselves or their tenets, or both, into Britain by another channel. But, in truth, such opinions as those entertained by the Waldenses, the Albigenes, the Bohemians, and the Lollards (for by this latter name the disciples of Wickliffe were distinguished, — a name probably given to them as being *tares*, *folium*, amongst the wheat.) had quietly diffused themselves over a great part of Christendom, in spite of the unrighteous pains taken by the church of Rome to put down all overt expression of them. Springing up in various and distant spots of Europe, they gradually became (so to speak) confluent. Nor is it impossible to trace the means by which this might be effected. The intercourse of mankind was considerable in those days, greater, perhaps, than we are apt to ima-

gine, in this age of stage-coaches, canals, rail-roads, and steam-boats. Pilgrimages promoted travelling to an extent now almost incredible;—every country took care to be provided with some bait or other for the holy palmer, and the more distant the journey the more meritorious the service. Vessels were regularly freighted with pilgrims. Licenses were granted by King Henry VI. in one year for the exportation of 2433 pilgrims to St. James of Compostella.¹ The wife of Bath

“Thries had been at Jerusaleme,
 She hadde passed many a strange streme,
 At Rome she hadde ben, and at Boloine,
 At Galice, at Saint James, and at Colome.”

Rome indeed, the heart as it were of Christendom, was perpetually receiving and expelling a current of idle or devout dwellers in every region under heaven, and was thus circulating intelligence of all kinds through all lands. The *home* circuit was still more trodden; 100,000 pilgrims, we are told, visited St. Thomas à Becket in a single year.² Commerce was then comparatively little, but it was carried on in a manner to secure much personal communication. Fairs, which continued a fortnight or three weeks, and whilst they continued, transformed a desolate heath perhaps, into a temporary city, with streets and shops, and houses, and “all appliances to boot,” destined to disappear once more when the mart was over, like a vision of fairy land, drew to-

¹ Ellis's Letters, i. 110. 2d Series.

² Ecc. Biog. i. 294.

gether from all quarters merchants, both native and foreign. Universities were not places of resort for the youth of the mother-country only, but were filled with students of divers nations; for, Latin being the conventional language of them all, no man, from whatever country, was excluded by the want of the vernacular tongue.¹ The same circumstance afforded to professors a facility of migrating from one university to another, as occasions might present themselves, without the tax of learning a new vocabulary. Minstrels were ever upon the stroll from abbey to abbey, — the welcome carriers of news to the secluded but inquisitive monks; and freemasons, a kind of nomade race, pitched their tents wherever they found occupation, and having reared the cathedral or the church with admirable art, journeyed on in search of other employers. Finally, the Italians and other aliens, who by favour of the pope were put into possession of church livings in every country to which his authority extended, furnished another channel of international communication. In the reign of Henry III., the annual value of the benefices so disposed of in England was 70,000 marks, a sum more than triple the whole revenue of the crown.² These were some of the many ways in which the

¹ Latin was the common language of schools also before and at the Reformation. In the "Monita Pædagogica ad suos Discipulos" of Lily, the grammarian, and first master of Paul's, is the following admonition: —

"Et quoties loqueris, memor esto loquere *Latine*,
Et veluti scopulos barbara verba fuge."

² Ecc. Biog. i. 30. note.

intercourse of mankind was maintained in those primitive times, and the circulation of any popular doctrine effectually secured, whatever obstacles might be opposed to it. Thus it was that the principles of the Reformation were slowly and silently making their way through Europe, when perhaps their progress was little suspected; and one of those under currents was setting in, which are not in the end less powerful because they happen for a season to be unobserved. It is singular, that when Dante conducts his hero to that quarter of the infernal regions where the heretics are paying the penalty of their sin, being condemned to stand upon their heads in jars of fire, he adds a remark indicative of the temper of the times, and much to our present purpose — that these fiery sepulchres were filled with victims to a number far beyond all expectation.¹ Wickliffe, we know, found himself very quickly at the head of a numerous and powerful body in England, simply because he furnished a mouth-piece to those who had not as yet mustered courage to speak out for themselves, so mistaken is the conclusion of the Roman catholic, that the unity of his church is to be inferred from its silence. A third part of the clergy, Wickliffe himself tells us, thought with him on the sacrament of the Lord's supper, and "would defend that doctrine on paine of theyr lyfe;" and Knighton, a contemporary writer, affirms, that you could not meet two people in the way but one of them was a disciple of Wickliffe.²

¹ *Inferno*, c. ix.

² *Ecc. Hist.* i. 97, 98.

Moreover, when he was cited before the bishops at Lambeth, it was not merely the influence of the Duke of Lancaster that protected him, as a useful partisan but the multitude clamoured for his **release**, as a teacher of the truth; for "his person was saved out of the hands of his enemies," (so says Fuller in his own inimitable manner) "as was once the doctrine of his godly namesake: they feared the people, 'for all men counted *John* that he was a prophet indeed.'"¹ The moment was peculiarly propitious to the extension of Wickliffe's opinions. The schism in the papacy occurred a few years before his death; and the spectacle of two infallible heads of the church anathematising one another, could not fail to open the eyes of Christendom to the unwarranted pretensions of both. To this circumstance, probably, Wickliffe was indebted for permission to end his turbulent life in peace, in his own parish, and in his own bed, since the disposition of Rome towards this arch-heretic was sufficiently testified when, forty-one years afterwards, the council of Constance, in impotent rage, condemned his bones to be exhumed, burned, and cast into the brook. But the Swift (such is its name) bore them to the Avon, that to the Severn, the Severn to the sea, to be dispersed unto all lands; which things are an allegory.

Of this great reformer himself, who so raised the waters not of this country only, but of Europe at large, that Luther came in with the next

¹ Mark, xi. 92.

wave, it is difficult to speak. A most effectual weapon he undoubtedly was for the pulling down of strong holds; but we may admire the wisdom of God in adjusting his instruments to the work which he has for them to do, when he raised up first a Wickliffe, and afterwards a Cranmer. Had they changed places, Cranmer's meek and gentle spirit would have been overborne by the almost irresistible torrent of corruption of the times of Edward; and, on the other hand, Wickliffe's daring and impetuous temper, and his hasty views of ecclesiastical polity, would have urged him to go all lengths with Henry, — and whilst he would have demolished a church of Rome, he would have left few or no materials for erecting a church of England. Cranmer and his colleagues have been pronounced by our great puritan poet, "time-serving and halting prelates;" happily, in one sense, they were so. Wickliffe would have been a man more after Milton's heart; but "the wisdom which is from above," we read, "is gentle:" and if there be one thing more than another that fixes the attention of sober-minded and considerate men when contemplating the progress of the Reformation, it is the calmness, the temper, the prudence, the presence of mind, with which Cranmer endeavoured to direct (like a good and guardian angel) the tempest on which he rode; and whilst he felt how much the fierce element was imperatively commissioned to destroy, he never for a moment forgot the still nobler part, how much it was permitted to spare: he steered the ark of his church with wonderful dexterity

through a sea of troubles, avoiding the scattered Cyclades, when it is probable that, had his great predecessor been the pilot, he would have run it aground, and left it a wreck. Wickliffe, as a sincere believer, was naturally vexed at the scandal by which he saw Christ's religion brought into contempt; as a secular churchman and a champion of the seculars, he hated the friars with a cordial hatred, and took pleasure in exposing their covetousness and frauds; as an academician, he could not tolerate their encroachments on the rights and privileges of the universities, and their surreptitious abduction of four fifths of the students; as a man of learning, the first of his day, he would give no quarter to monastic ignorance; as a subject of the King of England, he would not allow of a divided allegiance in a church of England: but whilst he stood up the advocate of these principles, the impetuosity of his temper drove him on to extravagant lengths, and now exhibits him not so much in the light of a religious reformer as of a religious revolutionist. Perhaps he blinded himself to the necessary consequences of many of his own opinions, and, like Wesley, was carried further, both in himself and in his followers, than he at first meant to go: but assuredly in him, and still more in his school, may be traced the elements of a character destined afterwards to attain to an equivocal eminence in our history, that of the puritan, and the various sects which, though not fully fledged till the civil wars, were tumbled

¹ See Milner's History of the Church, iv. 109.

forth like bats out of their hiding-places at the first shock of the Reformation, owed their origin perhaps to this vigorous, sincere, but incautious antagonist of the church of Rome. When we see him opposing the doctrine of transubstantiation, that fruitful mother of mischief, howbeit wavering, as it should seem, in his own mind between what was afterwards the "real presence" of Luther and the "spiritual presence" of Zuingli; denying the superiority of the church of Rome over other churches, and the power of the keys as pertaining to the pope rather than to any other priest; when we see him maintaining that the Gospel is alone, and of itself, a sufficient rule of faith and practice, and that all have a right to read it for themselves; that pilgrimages and indulgences are vain and unprofitable, the worship of saints unauthorised, and forced vows of celibacy unlawful; above all, when we find him proclaiming (though here he does not speak with the emphasis of Luther, who made this article the test of a standing or falling church,) that justification comes by faith in Christ alone¹; we praise the man, for we find him labouring strictly in his vocation, purifying the Word of God from traditions and additions which had made it of none effect, and disabusing the people of dangerous and deadly errors. Nay, more, he might have gone further if he pleased; and however inexpedient it might be to enlarge upon the doctrine of Divine decrees, — and of its inexpediency, we have an opinion, — still

¹ See Milner's *History of the Church*, iv. 190—196.

there would have been no indication in this of his weapons being carnal, of his treasure (and great that treasure was) being contained in an *earthen* vessel; but rather an argument that he felt strongly the error of the church of Rome in attributing so much to man's own powers, and that, impelled by such a feeling, he rushed into the opposite extreme, and refused to him such powers as were his due. But when he argues that the wickedness of the priest vitiates the acts of his ministry¹, in contradiction to the inference which may be fairly drawn from the text, where the people are declared to have "transgressed" because they despised the offering of the Lord, though the wickedness of Eli's sons was the excuse², and in contradiction to the express command of our Lord, that whatsoever the Scribes and Pharisees who sat in Moses' seat bid men observe, they were to observe and do, though they were not to do after their works³; when he maintains tithes to be mere alms, and affirms that parishioners have a right to withhold them in case the minister provokes them so to do, of which they are to be themselves the judges⁴; and when he teaches, in the same spirit, that church endowments in perpetuity may be resumed under similar circumstances by the patron or the king⁵, thereby subverting the very principles upon which not only ecclesiastical property rests, but all property whatever, and annihilating an

¹ See Wickliffe's Life as given in Fox, extracted in Dr. Wordsworth's Ecc. Biog. i. 52. 121.

² 1 Sam. ii. 17. 24.

³ Matt. xxiii. 2, 3.

⁴ Ecc. Biog. i. 53.

⁵ Ecc. Biog. i. 92.

establishment at a blow; when his immediate disciples, such as William Thorpe and lord Cobham, are found erecting themselves into inquisitors of the morals of the superior clergy, and denying them to be priests of God, whether archbishops or bishops, if their character, conversation, and conduct did not answer to a test of their own¹; these dogmas when we read, it is difficult to separate the conscientious reformer from the exasperated antagonist, or to refrain exclaiming with St. Paul, "Are ye not carnal, and walk as men?" It may not be fair to impute to Wickliffe himself all the extravagances of his followers, yet they are very natural consequences of the principles he adopted and taught; in many cases they must have seen the light in Wickliffe's own time; some of them undoubtedly attach to himself; and they are all, at any rate, remarkable as the first fruits of those opinions and practices which, when coupled with politics, some two centuries and a half later, overturned both altar and throne. We find the Lollard taking upon himself to pronounce on the call of his ecclesiastical ruler, and yielding or refusing him canonical obedience after a verdict of his own²: we find him traversing the country from town to town, preaching in churches and churchyards, in fairs and markets, by a self-constituted authority, without license had from the bishop, or regard paid to his inhibition or summons³: we find him stumbling at pontifical habits, and for himself going about in his blue or russet gown,

¹ Ecc. Biog. i. 125. 138.

² Ecc. Biog. i. 120, 121. 125.

³ Ecc. Biog. i. 162.

and barefoot¹: we find him strongly prejudiced against the use of church-music and organs (which was evidently the feeling of Wickliffe himself²), and quoting Scripture in support of his prejudice in the very spirit of the days of Cromwell, as though Christ would not raise the damsel to life until he had first put forth the *minstrels*³: we find him holding up to the clergy the duty of copying St. Paul to the letter, and of labouring like him with their own hands for their own maintenance⁴; and we find him (a circumstance which is here mentioned not as a matter of charge, but as a matter of fact, illustrating his resemblance to the puritan,) dealing in a phraseology of his own, expressive of the sect to which he belonged, and less loose and secular than was usual.⁵ It was natural that a party now becoming numerous, having religion for their common bond (the strongest of all), and holding some tenets not altogether favourable to

¹ Ecc. Biog. i. 182.

² See the opinions of this reformer, collected from his works, in the Rev. H. Baber's life of him, p. 32.

³ Ecc. Biog. i. 170.

⁴ Ecc. Biog. i. 176.

⁵ In one particular, this peculiarity of the Lollard must have administered a very wholesome rebuke to a sin of the times. He would not swear by any of the members of Christ's body, which was the heedless fashion of the day, but would content himself with such an affirmation, as "I am syker it is soth." (See the Rev. H. Baber's *Memoirs of Wickliffe*, prefixed to his *Translation of the New Testament*, p. 35.) May not the phrase a "*yeu-forsooth knave*," used by *Falstaff* (2 Hen. IV. ii. sc. 2.), have been a popular term of obloquy, originally applied to the Lollards by the dissolute and profane? See also Chaucer, "*The Shipman's Prologue*."

a monarchical government and an episcopal church, should be regarded with some suspicion. The sheriff's oath, as it was framed by statutes of Richard II. and Henry IV., required of that officer to watch the Lollards; and the clause to this effect continued in force till the time of Charles I., when Sir Edward Coke, on being made sheriff of the county of Buckingham, objected to it, and it was in consequence withdrawn.¹ Mr. Hume, who is less sceptical in weighing the value of evidence when it tends to cast imputations on religious professors than on some other occasions, boldly pronounces lord Cobham to have been guilty of high treason, (in spite of Fox's express testimony to the contrary,) and the sect in general to have had treasonable designs²: but St. Paul himself was called a "mover of sedition," though he actually preached that to "resist the power" was to "resist the ordinance of God." The executions of the Lollards, which took place between Wickliffe's death and the Reformation, appear to have been in reality on the charge of heresy, not of disaffection; though it is true that the latter accusation was put forward in one or two instances, as being the more popular charge, just as our Lord was accused of making himself a king, when a Roman tribunal could otherwise have seen no fault in him. Besides, the manner in which sentence was carried into effect, — which was in all cases, we believe, by fire, the appropriate punishment of heresy, — confirms this opinion. Still some of the

¹ Neal's Hist. of Puritans, i. 6.

² Fox, i. 740.

principles of the Lollard were, doubtless, of a dangerous political character: in his hands they appear to have lain dormant; but when he lapsed into the puritan, the politician was combined in him, and then they became active and mischievous. If he ran into extremes, he had some cause and excuse for so doing: he, at least, was not straining at gnats, but at camels. An unmitigated creed drove him into an unmeasured abomination of it; the personal corruption of the Roman catholic priest of those times, tempted him to question his official authority; his abuse of what was lawfully his own, to dispute his abstract right of it: but though in all this he might be mistaken, he was not mercenary; and whatever his opinions were, however untenable, he was true to them in life and in death, forfeiting for the sake of them his property, his liberty, and his peace, and often in the end sealing them with his blood. But, after all, the great glory of the Lollard was this, that he gave to the people the pure word of God. The work whereby Wickliffe hastened the Reformation, was his translation of the Scriptures into his own mother-tongue. Apart from this, his labours, valuable as they were, might not be thought of unmixed value. Herein he had the sure promise of God pledged to his success. "For as the rain cometh down and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater; so shall my word be, saith the Lord, that goeth forth out of my mouth; it shall not return unto me

void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it."¹ Void it did not return. Hitherto the Scriptures were little known. Cædmon, it is true, had paraphrased in verse detached portions of them in the seventh century. Bede, it has been before observed, had translated the Gospel of St. John. Translations of all the Gospels into Anglo-Saxon had been made between the reigns of Alfred and Harold. Elfric produced versions of many books of the Old Testament, as well as of the New; but, meanwhile, the invasion of the Danes threw the kingdom into a frightful state of anarchy, and long kept it so disturbed. Then the Norman conquest succeeding, again broke its spirit and changed its language; so that the word of God had become precious in the days of Wickliffe. The Anglo-Saxon, which still continued to be the staple of the dialect of England, was by this time saturated with Norman words (no great number having been adopted into it since); and whilst Chaucer was labouring to *fix* the English tongue (its *uringed* words) on principles of taste, amongst the courtiers and nobles, Wickliffe, perhaps even a more perfect master of it still, was establishing it yet more permanently, by knitting up in it the immortal hopes of the people at large, and stamping it in a complete translation of the Bible, with "holiness to the Lord." At this day his version can scarcely be called obsolete. I speak of the New Testament, for the Old has never yet been printed;

a reproach both upon the divines and the philologists of England, which, we trust, will speedily be removed. At this day, it might be read in our churches without the necessity of many even verbal alterations; and on comparing it with the authorised version of King James, it will be found that the latter was hammered on Wickliffe's anvil. By this great and good work the pleasure of the Most High prospered in his hand. An eager appetite for Scriptural knowledge was excited among the people, which they would make any sacrifice and risk any danger to gratify. Entire copies of the Bible, when they could only be multiplied by means of amanuenses, were too costly to be within the reach of very many readers; but those who could not procure the "volume of the Book," would give a load of hay for a few favourite chapters, and many such scraps were consumed upon the persons of the martyrs at the stake.¹ They would hide the forbidden treasure under the floors of their houses, and put their lives in peril, rather than forego the book they desired; they would sit up all night, their doors being shut for fear of surprise, reading or hearing others read the word of God; they would bury themselves in the woods, and there converse with it in solitude; they would tend their herds in the fields, and still steal an hour for drinking in the good tidings of great joy: — thus was the angel come down to trouble the waters, and there was only wanted some providential crisis to put the nation into it, that it might be made whole.

¹ Ecc. Biog. i. 290., where Fox and others attest these things.

CHAPTER VI.

LUTHER.—ERASMUS.—SIR T. MORE.—NEW TRANSLATION OF THE BIBLE.—DEMAND FOR IT.

SUCH was the condition of England in the fifteenth century: the minds of men generally alienated from the church of Rome by reason of its corruption; their religious knowledge improved, and improving daily, by the wider diffusion of the Scriptures in the mother-tongue, to which the art of printing now so effectually contributed; and a sect, neither few in numbers, nor wanting in activity or courage, in the heart of the kingdom, ready to profit by any occasion which might offer of opening the eyes of their countrymen. Providence, having now sufficiently prepared the world for the reception of such a character, raised up a great reformer, whose labours, though immediately confined to Germany, still made themselves felt throughout Europe, and more especially in this island.

Martin Luther, the son of a working miner in Saxony, was born at Isleben on the 10th of November, 1483, a day much to be remembered. He was a man for the times; qualified by the force of his character for giving them a wrench. In his early years he took on himself the vows of an Augustin monk, and, to use his own words,

was a "most mad Papist." Various circumstances concurred to disabuse him of his bigotry : they have been severally advanced with more or less emphasis according to the respective views of the writers who have treated this subject, — the secular historian tracing his conversion to secondary causes, the devout, ascribing it wholly to the grace of God. Both may be right ; it was probably the effect of accident, of reflection, and of time, God working by means of such instruments. At the age of three and twenty the business of his monastery carried him to Rome. He saw there more than was expedient. He was surprised to find, on near inspection, that the image, which he had been taught to believe fallen from Jupiter, wore many appearances of having been made by the craftsman. He was too sincere himself not to feel disgust at the symptoms of hollow faith which forced themselves upon his notice in the capital of Christendom ; and he returned to Saxony from his mission "with thoughts arising in his heart." He betook himself to the study of the Scriptures, with Erasmus for his help ; with whose system of interpretation, however, he does not seem to have been entirely satisfied. He felt an increasing dislike of the schoolmen, and soon entertained a suspicion, which, by degrees, ripened into a conviction, of the truth of that doctrine which proved afterwards the burden of his preaching, — justification by faith in Christ only.¹

¹ Nevertheless Luther is careful to maintain good works as the fruits of faith, though not as the *meritorious* cause of salvation. "Having so taught of faith in Christ," says he, "we now teach touching good works also. Seeing that by

Tetzel, a Dominican monk, was commissioned by the pope (Leo X.), who wished to recruit his treasury, whether for the supply of his extravagance, or the erection of his church, or the prosecution of his war against the Turks, to put up his indulgences for sale in Germany. Tetzel executed his trust with the most shameless contempt of all decency. There was no sin, however monstrous (and some he named), which he had not both the will and the power to remit. It was in vain for the German pastors to insist on penance; here was a papal missionary at hand ready to absolve from all pains and penalties. The indulgences were farmed; they were sold in the gross to the best bidders, and were by them dispersed amongst the retail pedlers of pardons, who resorted to the public houses, exhibited their wares, and picked the pockets of the credulous. Extravagance like this called up Luther, excited his honest indignation, and drove

faith thou hast apprehended Christ, by whom thou art justified, go now, love God and thy neighbours; pray to God, give him thanks, preach him, praise him, confess him; be good to thy neighbour, help him, do thy duty by him. These are truly good works, flowing as they do from that faith and joy conceived in the heart by reason of our forgiveness of sins through Christ." — Comment. on the Galatians, ii. 16. And again, "After that Christ has been apprehended by faith, and that I am become dead to the law, justified from sin, freed from death, the devil, and hell, through Christ, I do good works, I thank God, I give him thanks, I exercise charity towards my neighbour. But this charity, and the works consequent upon it, neither inform my faith, nor adorn it; but my faith informs and adorns my charity. This is my theology; these my paradoxes." — ii. 18.

him to write. He had no notion where this first step was to lead him. In the simplicity of his heart he thought that the pope would be on his side, and condemn such flagrant excesses in his emissaries. Leo was as little aware as himself of the critical position of his affairs. "Brother Martin," quoth he, "is a man of very fine genius;" and he regarded the whole matter as a battle of kites and crows. But Martin was in earnest, whatever Leo might be. Still he had little idea how much he would have to unlearn. He did not question, for instance, the pope's supremacy, till Eckius, one of his indiscreet antagonists, provoked him to scrutinise the pretension, and then, like honest Latimer, he found himself hard to be persuaded that our Saviour said, — "Peter, I do mean this by sitting in thy boat, that thou shalt go to Rome, and be bishop there five and twenty years after mine ascension, and all thy successors shall be rulers of the universal church after thee."¹ On he went, feeling his way, and light continued to break upon him. Two years later than the time when he wrote against indulgences (which was in 1517) he tells Spalatinus, the secretary of the Elector of Saxony, and his own confidential correspondent, that he had no intention to separate from the apostolic see.² He examines the decretals; and then he whispers in his friend's ear that he begins to suspect the pope to be anti-christ. He ponders somewhat longer, and he now acquaints him that he has not much doubt of the fact³; and shortly

¹ Latimer, Sermon. i. 188.

² Milner's Church History, iv. 404.

³ Id. iv. 406, 443.

after this (in 1520) he publishes his "Tract against the Popedom," in which he draws the sword; and then his "Babylonish Captivity," in which he throws away the scabbard. Measures are no longer kept by either party. On the 15th June, 1520, Leo issued his damnatory bull excommunicating Luther, delivering him over to Satan, requiring the secular princes to apprehend him, and condemning his books to be burned.¹ Luther, nothing dismayed, on the 10th December of the same year, returns measure for measure, and raising a huge pile of wood without the walls of Wittenberg, commits decretals, canon law, and bull to the flames together.² Time was when this would have been frenzy, it was still perilous; but public opinion, which the art of printing had called into being, and which was now gathering strength, was with the reformer. The anathema was torn in pieces at Erfurt, and was ill received every where.³ Politics again stood Luther's friend. Frederick, the elector of Saxony, his cautious but constant protector, had laid the new emperor (Charles V.) under personal obligations, by declining the imperial crown for himself, and transferring his interest to him;—here was a lion's mouth stopped. Then Charles and Francis were rival monarchs, and in the midst of their rivalry, the Lutheran heresy (like the earthquake at Thrasymenæ, which rolled away unperceived by the combatants) did not rivet their exclusive attention on the intrigues of the cabinet, or the clashing of arms; and moreover the Lutheran party might be use-

¹ Milner's Church History iv. 474.

² Id. iv. 497.

³ Id. iv. 475.

ful to either, to turn a balance. Accordingly, Luther ventured to encounter the diet of Worms, and felt, what he exclaimed to the vast multitude who hailed him as he stepped out of his carriage, that "God was on his side." He came out of that trial unharmed, however the smell of fire might have passed on him, and invested even with greater influence on public opinion than before. He found it necessary to submit to a friendly imprisonment in the castle of Wartburg, till the tyranny of the diet should be overpast; but he availed himself of this unacceptable leisure for the manufacture of his arms. On the one hand, he taught the people out of the Scriptures, giving them an admirable translation, first of the New, and then of the Old Testament, a translation which our own Cranmer kept ever by his side¹; he laboured with still greater care his Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians, a work containing wholesome doctrine and most necessary for those times, when (as in the days of St. Paul) faith in Christ was overlaid by ritual observances, and merit was pleaded where mercy should have been craved. On the other hand, he did not scruple to wield more ignoble implements of war; if the sword was not at hand, he could smite with the ox-goad. Coarse and grotesque caricatures of his opponents in a frontispiece, often recommended his works to his plebeian readers: a cardinal decorated with a fox's brush, which he trailed through the mire, and with which he bespattered his neighbours; a pope seated astride upon a sow, or furnished

¹ Strype, Cranmer, p. 267. fol.

with a pair of ass's ears, whilst a legion of imps, busy like the Rosicrucian gnomes, on mischief, would be crowning him with a nauseous mitre, or lowering him into an infernal abyss, or preparing fagots for his burning.¹ To these and the like weapons of warfare did this intrepid and unceremonious assailant descend, partly excused by the grosser taste of the times in which he lived, and partly by that disregard for petty proprieties, which is felt in a degree by most men of masculine minds, and which is felt by all men in moments of excitement, and when the cause which they have at heart is at stake. Melancthon, it is true, poured oil upon the waves; or, as Erasmus was pleased to express it, walked after Luther, as Lite after Ate²; still the whole surface of society was troubled, and many who had once thought that a storm might clear the air now heard the sound as of abundance of rain, with alarm, and girt up their mantles and ran before it. Erasmus, no doubt, was in this respect a type of many: he was in theory (at least in his earlier days) a reformer; he promoted the Reformation very essentially, and in a great variety of ways. The perspicuity and neatness of his style, the peculiar edge which he could put upon all his thoughts, the playfulness of his fancy, the copiousness of his knowledge, made him the most popular writer of the age. As a critic, he caused Scripture to be better known to scholars, by publishing the first printed edition of the Greek Testament: as a commentator, he caused it to be better understood; though by some fatality,

¹ Sleidan, *De Stat. Relig.* pp. 329, 468, 469.

² Milner, v. 340.

as Bishop Bull complains¹, he is prone, like Gro-
tius after him, to give certain important texts
an Arian bias; the effect perhaps of a capricious
temperament, since his writings in general fur-
nish proof enough of his Trinitarian orthodoxy.
Certainly we ourselves owe him a debt of grati-
tude for his paraphrase of the New Testament, a
work which Cranmer introduced into all the
parish churches in England, not indeed as fault-
less, but as the best he could find for that use,
and done by "the most indifferent writer²;"
mutilated and moth-eaten copies of it are
still occasionally to be seen chained to their desks.
In his colloquies, too, of which the influence
must have been very great, he lashes the abuses
of the Roman Catholic church, and the monks, and
friars above all, as the authors and abettors of
those abuses, with a rod of nettles; and a system
of things in which even the most sober thinker
would see much to ridicule, found in Erasmus
an assailant who could discover matter for merri-
ment even in subjects the most grave. In truth,
he had more wit than he could well manage; it is
often ill-timed and ill-directed³; often he hits re-
ligion itself when he aims it at superstition only;
and whilst he "shoots his random arrow o'er the
house, he hurts a brother."⁴ It is possible to

¹ Bull, Opera, i. 67. fol.

² Burnet, Hist. of Reform. ii. 37. fol. Strype's
Cranmer, p. 148. and Appendix 77. 1st ed.

³ Witness the following passage in a letter of Erasmus
to Ammonius, then at London: — "*Istis hæreticis vel hoc
nomine sum iniquior, quod instante brumâ nobis auxerint
lignorum pretium.*"

⁴ See his Convivium Religiosum.

imagine that had an infidel age, instead of an age of sound religious enquiry, immediately succeeded the times of Erasmus, his levity would have frequently proved mischievous, and the blows which he had intended should tell against the church of Rome only, and which under Luther's management did there spend themselves, would have been found misplaced, and apt to recoil. He was, perhaps, even more ambitious of reviving learning than religion; it was popish ignorance as much as popish heterodoxy that called him out. Literature was what he lived for. He could have wished that such a scholar as Melancthon, so splendidly endowed with talents for serving the cause of letters, had devoted himself to letters alone¹; and when at last he was moved to take an active part against the Gospellers, as they were called, it seems to have been in some measure from a notion that the Reformation was absorbing every other question, and that in consequence of it the study of profane authors was unreasonably neglected.² Erasmus, however, as we have already hinted, was alarmed at the commotions which Luther's innovations threatened. When the tug of war came, he showed that he had only been for a reformation on paper;

¹ See the Quotations from Luther's Epistles, given in Milner's Church Hist. v. 324.

² Ibid. v. 337. This however is a subject of regret even with Luther himself: — "Nunc cum tam magno incremento verbi non infeliciter sit repurgata doctrina pietatis, plerique perditè anhelant ad Sectas. Plerique vero non solum Sacras literas sed etiam omnes literas fastidiunt et contemnunt. — Digni certè quæ *apostolis Galatis* conferantur." — Comment. in Epist. ad Galat. i. 6.

he would detect abuses, but not correct them; he was desirous of the end, but afraid of the means; he was for the excision of the pound of flesh, but then it must be done without shedding one drop of blood. Sir Thomas More, though a person of much greater courage, both moral and physical, than Erasmus, herein partook of his feelings; he saw the evil, but could not see his way through it. His *Utopia*, written about the year 1513, when he was yet young, is the work of a man alive to the corruptions of a church of which he lived to be the champion, the inquisitor, and the martyr. He could then, through the medium of his ideal republic, and by the mouth of an imaginary speaker, pass censure upon the monks as the drones of society¹,—reduce the number of the priests to the number of the churches²,—remove images³,—advocate the right of private judgment⁴,—exhort that the work of conversion should be done by persuasion, but not coercion, holding the faith of a man to be not always an affair of volition⁵; he could banish from his imaginary kingdom those who condemned all heretics to eternal torments, as bigots⁶, and extend his principles of concession even far beyond those afterwards adopted by the author of the *Liberty of Prophesying*, and to a degree incompatible with the existence of any religious establishment whatever.⁷ It is true, that a salvo is added in conclusion⁸ (just as Erasmus would have added it under similar circumstances), that Sir Thomas More, for his part,

¹ *Utopia*, ed. 12mo. p. 117.² Id. 234.³ Id. 248.⁴ Id. 237.⁵ Id. 234. 267.⁶ Id. 233.⁷ Id. 243. 253.⁸ Id. 262.

thought much of this visionary; but if so, why agitate such questions and unsettle the minds of men to no purpose? Their author might indeed be disposed to shut his eyes when he pulled the trigger, but it is pretty clear that he aimed his piece at the church. But when that work was published, More little thought what he should live to witness, or that a Luther was nigh, even at the door,—five years later, and probably Utopia would never have seen the light; for the chancellor was one of the first to take alarm at the progress of the Lutheran heresy, and to prophesy no smooth things concerning it.¹ He wrote against it, attacking Luther, Tindall, and Frith, with great acrimony, and opposing his “Supplication of the Souls in Purgatory,” to a very popular pamphlet by one Fish, published at that time, entitled “The Supplication of Beggars,” in which the latter complained that they were robbed of their rightful property in the people’s alms by the friars; and that whereas the Pope had it in his power to release souls from purgatory for nothing, he would only do it for money; nay, that when he might extinguish it altogether, by a general gaol-delivery of the spirits in prison, he still persisted in tolerating its continuance.² A memorable instance it is of the force of religious prejudice, that Sir T. More, placid and gentle as was his natural temper, and averse as he had once shown himself to persecution for matters of opinion, should, nevertheless, have hardened his heart against the reformation, and

¹ See *Life of Sir T. More*, Eccl. Biog. ii. 109. 112.

² Fox’s *Acts and Monuments*, ii. 283.

been more than consenting to the death of Bilney and of Bainham.¹ In this last case, indeed, he seems to have known no touch of pity; for in the hope of making his victim discover his books and impeach his acquaintance who were members of the Temple, he whipped him at a tree in his garden at Chelsea, called the "tree of troth," and afterwards stood by when he was racked in the Tower. This is a sad falling off from the tolerant principles of his youth; but meanwhile many feverish years had passed over the head of Sir Thomas More, and inspired him with a dread of those who were given to change—the crisis which he had helped in a degree to call up, had come at the call, and the magician stood aghast at the potency of his own spell. We are unfair judges of the sentiments and conduct of men who lived upon the verge of the Reformation. We are born when order has arisen out of confusion, and a pure faith come forth from the refiner's fire; but it must be confessed, that before the event it was impossible to calculate its probable consequences. This only was certain, that in number they must be very many, in magnitude very great; and well might a wise and thoughtful man, who stood upon the edge of that heaving sea of troubles, contemplate the scene before him with an eye of anxiety, of jealousy, and of fear for the issue. Indeed the Reformation was, as one might expect, the cause of the *young*; a circumstance of which Sir Thomas More does not fail to take advantage, when in his controversy with Frith on the corporal presence, he always contemptuously speaks

¹ Fox, ii. 275—297. Burnet's Hist. Reform. i. 163, 164.

of him as "this *young* man."¹ And in a curious interlude, entitled "*Lusty Juventus*," written on the side of the Reformation, we read (*loquitur Diabolus*²) —

"The old people would beleve stil in my lawes,
But the yonger sort lead them a contrary way;
They wyll not beleve, they playnly say,
In old traditions as made by men,
But they wyll 'leve as the Scripture teacheth them."

There was too much of hazard in it, and the sacrifice of too many early associations, principles, and prejudices, for grey hairs. Time, however, that gentle innovator, settled these differences. At the period when the papal power was put down in England, nearly twenty years had elapsed since Luther first took up his parable against papal abuses. In this interval, a generation of aged defenders of the ancient faith had been gathered to their fathers, and had given place to such as had grown up under the influence of a better star. The press had been active, of which the wonderful influence was first made known upon this great question. The pure doctrines and heroic deeds of the German reformers circulated throughout England. Luther was in every mouth — ballads sung of him. His writings, together with those of Huss, of Zuingle, and of many anonymous authors whom the times evoked, were clandestinely dispersed. Tracts, with popular titles, such as "*A Booke of the Olde God and New*;" "*The burying of the Mass*;" "*A, B, C, against the Clergy*," made their appeals

¹ Fox, *Acts and Mon.* ii. 306.

² Percy, *Reliques of Ancient Poetry*, ii. 285., and Warton's *Hist of English Poetry*, iii., 201.

to the people. The confessions of some of the more eminent Lollards, and expositions of particular chapters of Scripture, which were thought to militate the most strongly against the errors of Rome, were industriously scattered abroad. Above all, Tindall's translation of the New Testament was now in the hands of many; for the price, as compared with that of Wickliffe's a century before, was just forty-fold less¹; and by means of it, the multitude were enabled to compare what the Gospel actually was, with what Rome had made it by traditions.² The art of printing in this age of the revival of the Gospel, answered in some measure to the miraculous gift of tongues in the age of its first publication. It was soon perceived, that if the pope did not put an end to the press, the press would put an end to the pope. Awkward attempts were made to defeat its labours. It was a new principle introduced into the social system, which in its application, after the experience of three centuries, is found to involve many difficulties, and with which, at that time of day, neither its friends nor its foes knew how to deal. Tonstall, bishop of London, a man of a very different spirit from his brutal successor Bonner, bought up all the copies of Tindall's Translation, and burnt them at Paul's Cross³; a humane but useless measure; for it soon appeared, that unless he could buy up ink, paper, and types, he was only making himself Tindall's customer. Accordingly, a new edition speedily issued from the Antwerp press, in which former errors were corrected; and though one

¹ Wordsworth's Eccl. Biog. i. 286.

² Fox, ii. 963.

³ Ibid. ii. 286.

golden branch had been torn away, another, not of the same but of a better metal, succeeded it. The importation of these foreign wares was strictly forbidden; but there was a demand for them in the country, and they were smuggled notwithstanding. Proclamations were uttered against the possessors of all heretical writings, but they were set at nought.¹ Spies were encouraged; the husband tempted to betray the wife, the parent the child, and a man's foes became literally those of his own household.² Nay, more, by a refinement in cruelty, the strongest instincts of nature were outraged, and a daughter was compelled to fire the fagots with her own hands, by which her father was to be burned.³ But measures like these were only calculated to defeat the object which they were intended to promote.

Strong public feeling, when matured in its growth and righteous in its principle, cannot be effectually suppressed — check it, and it rages impatiently; whilst, if its fair course be not hindered, it may only make sweet music.

¹ Fox, ii. 286. ² Wordsworth's *Eccl. Biog.* i. 292

³ Fox, pp. 749. 1240.

CHAPTER VII.

CRANMER. — THE DIVORCE. — THE SUPREMACY

WE have now touched upon a few of the many elements which were secretly at work preparing England for a reformation of religion, and without some regard to which it would be impossible to account for the rapid pace at which it was consummated: let us but shut our eyes to this under-current of events — take our stand at the accession of Henry the Eighth — and endeavour to guess at the future; and what could seem to us more improbable, than that a reign so begun was destined to effect the extinction of the papal power in England? Henry mounted the throne with a treasury full to overflowing, the fruits of a revenue improved by the wisdom of his father's laws, by the care with which that sagacious monarch husbanded the nation's purse, and, it must be added, by the rapacity of Dudley and Empson, his fiscal officers; who then would conjecture that an exhausted exchequer was to drive him to the plunder of the church, in order to continue the profusion which its affluence had taught him? — He had mounted the throne a zealous, and a learned, having been himself intended, it was said, for the see of Canterbury, had not the death of his elder brother put the crown upon his head instead of the mitre;

ambitious, moreover, of papal distinctions, and eventually able to procure them by entering the lists with Luther as a volunteer champion of the ancient creed: who then would conjecture that the title of "Defender of the Faith," in the sense in which it was conferred upon him, was the very last to which he was to have a just claim? — He mounted the throne, having Katharine, his brother's widow, for his wife, by a dispensation from the Pope, who counted it the ratification of his own authority in England, that her very princes were thenceforth to derive their title to the crown from the validity of this his bull; who then would conjecture that this stroke of policy, as it was thought, for which a point had been strained at Rome, was to be precisely the ruin of the politician, and that the subversion of papal usurpation in England would be actually effected by the very measure which was to have confirmed it? Amongst the distinctive marks by which God's hand may be perceived regulating human affairs, this, says Barrow, in his noble sermon on a special Providence¹, is one, — "the wonderful strangeness of events compared with the ordinary course of things, or the natural influence of causes: when effects are performed by no visible means, or by means disproportionate, unsuitable, repugnant to the effect:" — and surely, when tried by such a criterion, nothing can furnish stronger evidence of a work which "was not of man but of God," than the events which immediately preceded the Reformation, and the consequences which flowed from them.

¹ Sermon. xi. on the Gunpowder Treason.

It might seem that a question concerning the king's marriage was the most unlikely thing in the world to set this great cause in motion, — yet such was the fact. — Henry, after living nearly twenty years with Katharine, felt, or affected to feel, scruples as to the lawfulness of marrying a brother's widow. Whether the exception which was taken against the legitimacy of the Princess Mary by the French ambassador when the marriage between her and the Duke of Orleans came under discussion, was honestly made and did in reality open Henry's eyes to a new view of his own position, — whether Wolsey started the objections which unsettled the King's mind, with the intention of serving his own ends by thwarting the Emperor the Queen's nephew, and providing the King with a match more agreeable to himself, — whether the death of the Queen's untimely offspring with a single exception, did, as he pretended, fill him with concern as the accomplishment of the Levitical law, "that if a man take his brother's wife it is an unclean thing; they shall be childless¹;" — or whether, on the other hand, he was weary of a wife whose ascetic devotions might seem to fit her more for a convent than a court, whilst her person, not attractive at best, was now rendered less so by increasing infirmities; — or, lastly, whether the charms of Ann Bullen had conjured up in him this strong sense of the sin he had committed in uniting himself with Katharine, as may be imagined without any great breach of charity, of a man, whose conscience, upon other

¹ Levit. xx. 21.

occasions, besides this, seems to have been singularly ill-timed in its suggestions, — so it was, that a divorce was determined upon, and measures were adopted to carry the determination into effect. Opinions were divided: the sexes in general took opposite sides; but the learned themselves were not agreed. — On the one hand, it was argued that the prohibition of such a marriage was clear in the Levitical law¹, and that such prohibition was not to be considered as confined to the Jews, for that the violation of it is expressly numbered among the sins of the Canaanites by which the land was polluted², and therefore that it was of universal obligation; moreover, that John the Baptist declared of Herod, that it was “not lawful for him to have his brother’s wife;” that John, therefore, held the law of Moses upon this point to be still binding³; — that in the same manner St. Paul condemned the Corinthian convert of a fornication not so much as named among the Gentiles, “in that he had his father’s wife⁴,” which like the other was one of the degrees forbidden in Leviticus, and forbidden in the very same chapter of Leviticus as the relation in question⁵; — that St. Paul, therefore, pronounced the Mosaical law, in these particulars, still to stand good.

On the other side, it was replied, that the Levitical precept must be understood, of not taking a brother’s wife whilst he was living, for that the brother was actually enjoined to take the brother’s widow, he having died childless, and to raise up seed unto his brother⁶; — that

¹ Levit. xviii. 16.

² Ibid. 24.

³ Matt. xiv. 4.

⁴ 1 Cor. vi. 1.

⁵ Ibid. xviii. 8.

⁶ Dent. xxv. 5.

with regard to Herod, he was guilty in the case of Herodias, not of incest, but of adultery, — Philip, as seems probable from Josephus, being yet alive; — that the like must be said of the Corinthian delinquent, “fornication not to be named among the Gentiles,” implying, that the offence was committed in his father’s life-time, since otherwise the connection, however monstrous, was not unknown among the Persians, and that even amongst the Jews Adonijah had desired Abishag in marriage.¹

To this it was rejoined, — that the exception, in the general law proved only that God might dispense with his own ordinances for his own ends, and that the end in this case was, the preservation of a family in Israel, and care for the protection of the genealogy of the future Messiah, objects now accomplished, and the means thereto now superseded; — that in Herod’s affair, it cannot be with certainty affirmed that when he married Herodias, Philip was living; that she certainly deserted her former husband, but that she was probably divorced from him; and that, for aught which appears to the contrary, Josephus who condemns her conduct as an infraction of the law, understands when he does so, her marriage with her husband’s brother, he not having left her *childless*²; — that the case of the Corinthian does not admit of the interpretation that he took his father’s wife before his father’s death; for that the seventh commandment alone was provision enough against such an abuse, and that the eighteenth chapter of Le-

¹ 1 Kings, ii. 17.

² Joseph. Antic. lib. xviii. § 6. n. 207

viticus, in which this and similar abominations are forbidden, and to which St. Paul has here an eye, must have contemplated something distinct from adultery, and does in fact contemplate the case of incestuous alliance.

Much more was said. But the question was not debated upon scriptural grounds only. The fathers, the schoolmen, and the Pope's decretals were all brought into the controversy, and a case under no circumstances very simple became immeasurably complicated. It was at this period, about the year 1529, that the King being upon a journey, chanced to pass a night at Waltham-Cross; on this occasion it fell to the lot of two of his servants to sleep at the house of one Mr. Cressy, of Waltham, where the conversation at the supper-table happened to turn upon the great topic of the day — the royal divorce. Of the party, was a fellow of Jesus' College, Cambridge, whom the plague had driven from the University, and who had taken up his quarters meanwhile at Mr. Cressy's house, being a relation of his wife, and the tutor of his children; his opinion was asked, he being a learned academician, — it went to this, that the question was one concerning the meaning of Scripture and nothing else, and that of this, men of learning, and the Universities more especially, would be the fittest judges; for "that the Bishop of Rome had no such authority as whereby he might dispense with the word of God." Here were some great principles involved, Scripture set up as the rule of action; the interpretation of it asserted to be matter of private right; and the Pope himself declared not to be above it.

The sentiment was reported to the King, already wearied with his "infinite cause," as he called it; and the author of it, much against his own will, was sent for to court, — it was Cranmer.

"How far God fetches his purposes about!" is the contemplation of Bishop Hall on the manner of Saul's call to the kingly office. "The asses of Kish, Saul's father, are strayed away; what is that to the news of a kingdom? But God lays these small accidents for the ground of greater designs."¹ The sickness at Cambridge, the moment at which it occurred, the trifle which determined Waltham above all places for the retreat of Cranmer, the casual sojourn of the king there for a single night, the house of all the houses to which his secretary and almoner were directed for their evening's lodging, and the subject-matter of the conversation, incidents, most of them inconsiderable in themselves, and independent of one another, yet all conspiring to call out of obscurity probably the fittest, perhaps the only fit man in the whole kingdom, for superintending ecclesiastical affairs at a crisis so peculiar, — this is altogether a combination of circumstances, which it may be philosophy to call a chapter of accidents, but which it is not superstition to ascribe to the finger of "a God that governs the earth." With so splendid an instance before our eyes, that opinion can scarcely be treated with disrespect, which holds the call to the ministry to be in some degree, though certainly in a subordinate degree, external; to be the voice of events which have been so ordered as to guide the party to his novitiate, and to land him at last in the

¹ Contemplations, lib. xii.

priestly office. But this by the way. — Cranmer had been a hard student, and in the subjects of his study had kept pace with the times in which he lived. He began, where most scholars in those days ended, with Duns Scotus and the subtle doctors, a discipline which had at least the merit of making astute disputants; and as Bishop Berkeley said of academical learning in general, might serve even when forgotten, like a crop when ploughed under, to improve and enrich the soil.¹ Escaped from the schools, he betook himself to the writings of Erasmus, for whom he seems ever to have entertained a strong personal regard, perhaps as being the author who first opened his eyes. Luther absorbed him in his turn; and now the controversy between that reformer and his opponents being serious, agitating matters no less than the fundamentals of the Christian faith (*agitur de vitâ et sanguine*), the appeal moreover being made to Scripture alone, Cranmer set himself resolutely to the examination of the word of God, that he might qualify himself for exercising a sound judgment on these high arguments: and of the patience, the learning, the discrimination, with which he did this, the Liturgy of our church (were there no other) would be an everlasting monument; in which, whoever will be at the pains of taking a prayer

¹ The Querist, § 198. A work containing perhaps as much genuine humour, as many sagacious observations on the real causes of various social and political evils affecting commonwealths, Ireland in particular (for it is written for the benefit of that country), and as many shrewd and practical hints for the removal of them, as any in our language.

or a clause to pieces, will find occasion to wonder at the masterly knowledge of the Bible which the selection even of some single expression often betrays, so that having pursued happily, as he thinks, some intricate point of theology through windings manifold, and having arrived at a conclusion which he almost fancies his very own, he will be surprised to find that our reformer has been beforehand with him even in this, and has given some unobtrusive indication of his being in possession of the secret by a word in season dropped out of his abundance as he passes on his way.

Such was the man whom the accidents we have recounted introduced to King Henry. Henry commanded him to digest in writing the substance of what he had uttered on the question of the divorce, and committed him to the hospitality of the Earl of Wiltshire, the most accomplished nobleman of the day, the father of Ann Bullen, where that friendship was formed between the future archbishop and the future queen, which still further promoted the cause of the Reformation, and disposed the latter to be in heart, as well as in principle, a nursing mother to the infant church.

Meanwhile the King's cause, which had been submitted in an early stage of it to the Pope's decision, had made small progress. Cardinal Campejus had been united in a commission with Wolsey to try it in England, but there was no serious intention of ever giving judgment. Whatever hand Wolsey might have had in stirring the question at first, he soon found that he should not be able, to substitute for Katharine a queen

of his own ; and though not a cordial churchman, nor caring about giving offence to churchmen, nor very nice upon the sin of sacrilege (for his example was afterwards quoted in the dissolution of the abbeys), still he was not desirous of exchanging even the most rigorous Romanist for a Lutheran, and he therefore was lukewarm in the prosecution of the suit. His colleague had his private instructions and private interests too. The affair was embarrassing to the Pope : he could not decide without exasperating an Emperor of Germany or a King of England, and he seems to have halted between the two, hoping perhaps that some propitious accident of death or disaster might intervene to release him from his unpleasant dilemma. Accordingly, the judgment of the commissioners is expected from day to day ; the court meets, deliberates, examines witnesses, and determines nothing. It was for the credit of the King that matters should not seem to be done in heat or haste. The Queen was to be cited ; on her non-appearance, she was pronounced contumacious ; a fresh citation to be issued ; a reservation to be made of some collateral question for the Pope's own decision ; the sittings of the court to follow the rules of the Consistory of Rome, of which it was but a branch, and the cause to be suspended during the vacations at Rome ; finally, the commission was to be closed, and the whole process to be transferred to the hearing of the Pontiff himself, and the King and Queen to appear before him in person or by proxy. But this last was an alternative to which the King had too high a stomach to submit. who pleaded the prerogative of his crown.

which did not allow of being subjected to foreign jurisdiction, and the liberties of his people, which demanded that questions of marriage should be tried at home and by their own church.¹ Thus passed away six long years in fruitless negotiations, till Henry, having now secured the opinion of nearly all the universities at home and abroad in his favour, a measure which Cranmer, whom he had sent upon the Continent as his champion for this purpose, had been very instrumental in accomplishing, as well as the verdict of the most distinguished individuals amongst the divines and scholars of Europe, gave proof that the "strong blood" of the Plantagenets was in his veins, took the law into his own hands, married Ann Bullen probably on the 14th November, 1532, and set the Pope at defiance.

On reviewing the question of the divorce (as by a misnomer it has been called), there can be little doubt, we suppose, that the marriage was in the first instance unlawful. The authorities which declared it ~~so~~ preponderated at the time of the discussion; many, and amongst others Archbishop Warham, had protested against the match when it was originally proposed; and when the canon of prohibited degrees was afterwards adjusted by Archbishop Parker, it was expressly determined that a man may not marry his brother's wife. If, therefore, the conduct of Henry had been such in other respects as to give ~~to him~~ of a scrupulous conscience, it might have been credited that in this instance he was sincere in his professions of uneasiness; and that believing Katharine and himself to be joined

¹ Burnet. Hist. Reform. lib. i. 125. fol.

together otherwise than God's word doth allow, he sought for relief in the dissolution of the contract. But that contract was entered into with deliberation; it was made when the King was a minor,—it was repeated and ratified when he was of just age; the objections, whatever they were, were not new; they had been raised and over-ruled, when Katharine was to be the bride, when she had youth to plead for her, and a dower of unparalleled magnitude, the first fruits of the trans-Atlantic treasures of Spain: it was only when these advocates were no more her blossom faded, and her golden fruit gathered and gone, that the objections (valid in themselves) became fatal. Her lot in life was indeed hard; but her grave at least has been strewn with immortal flowers; and “the meek sorrows and virtuous distress of Katharine have furnished some scenes (says no mean critic) which may be justly reckoned amongst the greatest efforts of tragedy.”

And now, Archbishop Warham being sick unto death, the King intimates to Cranmer, who was engaged in his service on the Continent, his intention of promoting him to the primacy. There are some men who seek honours, and some who have honours thrust upon them: Cranmer belonged to the latter class; he was not prepared for so great and sudden an elevation. Under pretence that the King's affairs still required his presence abroad, he tarried six months longer, in the hope that Henry might consign the crosier to some other hand.¹ There was no expectation

¹ Dr. Lingard asserts that there were few instances of the see of Canterbury being filled so soon after a vacancy. Yet

in this,—no *fuga ad salices*. Ambition is made of sterner stuff than the spirit of Cranmer. Even at an age when such a passion, if ever, must have been most active, and when he was as yet without a patron, he, like Parker, declined the offer of a fellowship in cardinal Wolsey's college at Oxford, preferring the society of his old friends, or fellow-students, to the more splendid prospects which a connection with the great favourite of the day presented; and even risking his displeasure rather than do violence to his own early associations, and bid adieu to the scenes of his boyhood and his youth. Neither was it of his own good will that he was in the first instance brought under the King's notice, by the question of the divorce;—on the contrary, he quarrelled with his friends who had thus disturbed his repose, pleaded that it was a matter on which he had bestowed no pains or study, and begged in vain that he might be excused the honour of being closeted with a king.¹ Nor,

Archbishop Bredwardin died August 26. 1349, and Islip was appointed his successor by a papal bull, dated October 7. 1349, and was consecrated December 20th. Archbishop Arundel died February 19. or 20. 1413; Chichelè succeeded March 4., and received his pall in July. Chichelè died April 12. 1443; Stafford succeeded him by a bull dated May 15., and was consecrated in August. Stafford died in June or July 1452; Kemp succeeded by bull dated July 21. and on September 22. received his cross. Kemp died March 22. 1543, Bourchier was elected April 22., and received the bull of confirmation August 22. Langton died January 27. 1500; Dean was elected in April, and confirmed May 26.

See Mr. Todd's Introduction to Cranmer's Defence of the Sacrament, p. xxxvii.

¹ Mr. Ellis remarks, (Original Letters, vol. ii. p. 47.)

indeed, were the times such as promised the head which wore the mitre an office of ease. Likely it was to prove but "a glistening grief," — "a golden sorrow," to the wearer; and it wanted no great sagacity to foresee (what the King told Cranmer when he afterwards changed his arms) that the pelican was fitter for his crest than the crane; seeing that "he would one day have to shed his blood for his young ones, if he stood to his tackling."¹ But there was yet another and a stronger reason for Cranmer holding back; — the scruples he entertained touching the oath of fidelity to the Pope, which was exacted of an archbishop at his presentation. As yet the supremacy of the Pope was acknowledged;

that upon Wolsey's fall, Henry pressed the chancellorship upon Cranmer, more than once, before he offered it to Sir Thomas More. Had it been so, the refusal would but have been of a piece with the rest of Cranmer's private history; and, accordingly, we had once adduced this fact as a further argument of his unambitious spirit — but it has been pointed out to us by a high authority in ecclesiastical history, that Mr. Ellis has here mistaken Warham for Cranmer. Both the words of Erasmus's letter (which is the reference, *Epist.* lib. xxvi. 55.) and its date prove this to be the case. It is there said, that the chancellorship was offered more than once to the *Archbishop of Canterbury*, and that he excused himself on the plea of age. Now, the date of the letter being January 1531, Cranmer was not then Archbishop, but Warham, who died in August 1532; moreover, Cranmer was at that time only in his 42d year, and therefore could not possibly consider himself too old for the office. We notice a solitary error, for the sake of having an opportunity of expressing our thanks to Mr. Ellis, for the invaluable materials for English history which his researches have brought to light, and the very instructive notes with which they are accompanied.

¹ Strype, Cranmer, p. 126. fol.

and though the subject had been mooted two years before, and even the title of supreme head of the church and clergy of England had been ascribed to Henry by the convocation under Archbishop Warham, in 1530, it was done reluctantly, and was not immediately followed up. Here, therefore, Cranmer was embarrassed. The oath, however, he took under a previous public¹ protestation, "that he did not admit the Pope's authority any further than it agreed with the express word of God; and that it might be lawful for him at all times to speak against him, and to impugn his errors when there should be occasion."² The honesty of this proceeding has been often made the subject of debate; and it must be acknowledged that it presents some symptoms of a mind yet scarcely escaped from the dangerous casuistry of the Roman Catholic doctors;—some touch of that jesuitical spirit which is so effectually exposed in the letters of Pascal; and against the insidious approaches of which even the ~~native~~ integrity of the single-hearted Cranmer was not altogether proof. In this instance, as in the instance of Sir T. More's persecutions, and indeed of his own, it was a corrupted and corrupting creed that was in fault, rather than an evil heart or evil eye in the individuals themselves. Still many circumstances

¹ The *publicity* of this proceeding is clearly proved in Mr. Todd's *Life of Cranmer*, vol. i. p. 65. It is so far of importance, as it shows that the three Bishops—Lincoln, Exeter, and St. Asaph, (the last of them, Dr. Standish, a most zealous catholic,)—who were fixed upon to consecrate Cranmer, had the opportunity of refusing him consecration had they thought proper.

² Id. p. 17.

may be pleaded in extenuation of Cranmer's conduct. He did not take the Pope by surprise; the name, the writings, and the person of Cranmer, were familiar to him; Cranmer had openly contended against his dispensing power in the case of the divorce both in Germany, and at Rome itself, nearly three years before; so that even had no protest been made on his part, the Pope must have been aware of the character and opinions of the man; and if he admitted him to the primacy, he must have been conscious that he did it at his peril. The truth was, the Pope had no choice, and he felt that he had none: doubtless he would have been too glad to reject the King's candidate and to substitute for him a creature of his own; but he knew with whom he had to deal in Henry, not with a tame monarch, and with what he had to deal in England, no longer with a tame people. He knew that the very point at issue, the necessity of his bull at all to legalise the appointment to the see of Canterbury, was even then disputed, and that to withhold it under such circumstances would be merely to hasten the crisis which he had too much reason to think was in any case at hand, the loss of his supremacy. The event proved this. He did not refuse the bull, (not that he was aware of Cranmer's protest at the time; but of Cranmer's character, which was equivalent to it, he was perfectly aware,) and accordingly he staved off the evil that menaced him for one year more, but it was only for one year. This was the last bull he sent into England during the reign of Henry; and had that capricious prince listened to the advice and en-

treaty of Cranmer, application would not have been made even for this¹, and then Henry would have been sooner spared the dishonour of subjecting his bishops to a dilemma by which perjury to the Pope or to the King could scarcely be escaped, and Cranmer would have been spared the equivocation by which he laboured to reconcile oaths which were irreconcilable. Here, after all, was the grievance, and on those who exacted them was, in a great measure, the guilt. Nothing less was required of a bishop than to swear allegiance to two masters, who had no two interests in common:—to the Pope, that he would, from that hour forward, be faithful and obedient to St. Peter and to the holy church of Rome, to my Lord the Pope and his successors; that they should suffer no wrong by any means with his advice, consent, or connivance; that their counsel he would not discover, their regality he would help, maintain, and defend, against all men; their rights, honours, privileges, authorities, he would augment and promote; and any designs against the same, which came to his knowledge, he would resist and denounce:—to the King, that he would thenceforward utterly forsake all clauses, words, sentences, grants, which he had or should have hereafter from the Pope's Holiness in virtue of his bishopric that in any wise were or might be prejudicial to his Highness, his heirs, successors, dignity, privilege, or estate royal; that to him and his he would be faithful and true, and live and die with him against all people; that he acknowledged himself to hold his bishopric of him only, and accordingly besought of him the resti-

tution of the temporalities of the same.¹ Now to be impaled on one or other of the horns of such an alternative as this was a cruel situation into which no man ought to have been forced; and though it is an easy thing for an indifferent spectator at a distance to philosophise upon the unseemly writhings of the victim, yet some allowance will be made for him by every pitiful-hearted observer if, in his struggles to get off the hook, he should chance to uncover his nakedness. The question, indeed, resolved itself into this; were there, or were there not, to be bishops in England? for if none would take the oaths who could not acquiesce in both of them to the letter, and if none were to be admitted to consecration who refused either of the oaths, the order of prelates was at an end.²

On the 30th March, 1533, Cranmer was consecrated by the Bishops of Lincoln, Exeter, and St. Asaph; and in the May following (the convocation having declared the King's marriage with Katharine unlawful) he publicly pronounced the sentence of their separation; and about the same time confirmed, by another judgment, the match with Ann Bullen. Thus was he now fairly embarked in the same boat with the King, and the part he took in the transactions of these days was faithfully treasured up in the memory of Mary, and

¹ See Burnet, Hist. of Ref. vol. i. p. 123. fol., where the oaths are given at full.

² Cranmer, when examined before the commissioners at Oxford, touching the supremacy, urges with great force this same argument against the Queen herself, whose oaths to the state and to the Pope being so repugnant — "She must needs be forsworn to the one." — Fox, vol. iii. p. 660.

served at length (though not in the scriptural sense of the expression) to heap coals of fire upon his head. But however important such measures were in fact, they were doubly so in principle. The Pope had joined a King and Queen together as lawful man and wife; his right to do this is not only disputed, but denied; and the church of England, assuming an attitude of independence, rescinds his decision, and sets his authority at naught. This could not be passed over. Rome threatens the King with excommunication; and as the last ounce it is that breaks the camel's back, so here the menace proved enough to try the question of papal claims upon England, and to effect the rejection of them for ever.

The grounds of such a decision were many and various; in the first place, St. Peter himself, on whose transmitted authority the popes pretended to found their own, was not at all superior to the other apostles:—"Thou art Peter," said indeed our Lord to him, "and on this rock will I build my church;" but he only built it upon him as he built it upon James or John. Of the church of Ephesus, it was expressly declared, that it was built "upon the foundation of the *apostles* and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone."¹ In whatever sense, therefore, Peter might be called the rock, (if indeed to Peter the expression referred, and not to Christ,) James or John might be called so too. When an apostle was to be appointed in the room of Judas, it did not fall to Peter's pro-

¹ See Jewel's Defence of the Apology, p. 634. fol.

vince especially to choose him; when deacons were instituted, it was not exclusively by Peter that it was done; the bishop of the first and principal church after our Lord's ascension was not Peter but James; and by James the decree touching circumcision was issued. St. Paul had no scruple in rebuking Peter to his face when he dissembled, or in asserting of himself that "he was not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles."¹ But further, even had St. Peter been all that the church of Rome pretended, his superiority would still have been of person, not of place, and could not attach to Rome more than to Antioch; nor so much, if Rome, as some even of the earliest interpreters of Scripture affirmed, was Babylon. Moreover, whilst the commission given by our Lord to Peter, "Feed my sheep," (which was a text put in the fore-front of the controversy by the Romanists) could be interpreted to mean that the whole world was to be the Pope's diocese, there was nothing which Scripture might not be made to mean; besides, if the Pope was St. Peter's successor, wherein, it was asked, did the succession consist? What one thing had St. Peter like the Pope, or the Pope like St. Peter? Did St. Peter take away the keys of the kingdom of heaven; hide the treasures of God's word; consign souls to purgatory, or release them from it at his pleasure for silver or gold; pray in an unknown tongue; carry out the sacrament with lights and bells; sell indulgences, palls, bulls, pardons, indulgences? Did he call himself the head of the church,

¹ 2 Cor. xli. 5.

the bishop of bishops, and usurp dominion over all God's creatures? Did he exempt himself from the power of civil government; maintain wars; set princes at variance; or sit in a chair with a purple gown and regal sceptre and diadem of gold and precious stones, and set his feet on kings' necks? Did St. Peter, it was asked in conclusion, leave these affairs and others like them in charge to his successors from hand to hand?

Nor, in transferring the supremacy from the Pope to the King did the church of England act unadvisedly, however it was objected to her that civil princes should confine themselves to civil matters. Certainly, nothing could be more inexpedient, whether for the good government of the country, or its spiritual improvement, than that there should be in it two sovereign heads, each desirous to have the pre-eminence, and a struggle be thus perpetuated between politics and religion; such a mingling of hot blood with sacrifice could never be acceptable to a God of order and peace; and how was the inconvenience to be avoided except by making one and the same person in all causes, ecclesiastical as well as civil, supreme? Neither was this a new thing under the sun: God had of old time commissioned kings to execute many holy offices.—Isaiah had spoken of them as nursing fathers of the church¹;—Moses, the civil magistrate, had rebuked Aaron the priest for a breach of duty;—Joshua had set many things in order which pertained to God; enjoining circumcision, commanding sacrifices to be made, and the blessings and curses of the law to be sounded in the ears

.. .. 1 xlix. 23.

of the people ; — David had directed and superintended the removal of the ark to Jerusalem ; — Solomon had reared the Temple, addressed his subjects afterwards in a godly oration, deposed Abiathar the priest, and set up Zadok in his place ; — Josiah had restored and reformed the worship of his time ; cleansed the Temple, broken the brazen serpent, now become an object of idolatry, and despatched his priest to enquire of the prophetess respecting the copy of the law which he had recently discovered¹ ; and whatever may be said of a change of times and systems since these dynasties passed away, still the principle itself is not affected by such change ; and nothing can be more certain than that these persons were temporal and not spiritual governors of their nation, and yet that in matters ecclesiastical they were authorised to a certain extent to interfere : — we say, to a certain extent ; for neither could these sovereigns, nor can any sovereigns, as such, excommunicate, or bind, or loose, or perform, one of the priestly functions ; still they may lawfully see that others duly commissioned do perform them ; it is one thing to exercise the office of a bishop, and another to provide that a bishop there be, and a fit one, to execute it for himself.²

Neither does it seem to be unmeet that they who are themselves the “ ministers of God,” (as St. Paul expressly calls the supreme magistrates) the “ powers ordained of God,” men to whom “ every soul,” without any reservation of ecclesiastics, is to be subject “ because they

¹ 2 Kings, xxii.

² See Jewel's Defence of the Apology, p. 571.

are of God," should have some voice in the approval of the servants of God's church, and some control over them; more especially when it is remembered that it is the duty of a king to rule well, and that it would be difficult for him to rule at all, with a body of men within his realm and out of his own reach, who must always possess, so long as the concerns of a world beyond the grave can touch mankind, a very powerful lever in their hands, which, however honestly it may be, and is in general applied, is nevertheless capable of misapplication, as the history of every nation can testify, and none more than our own.¹ And without any reference to extreme cases, to the danger, for instance, of religious meetings becoming, in critical seasons, schools of sedition, and of the divine resolving himself into the demagogue; a danger, however, by no means chimerical when there is nothing to connect the system of religious instruction with the office of the civil magistrate; even in ordinary times it would be found, and it has been found, that the spirit of the independent congregation and that of the government under which it exists, but to which it owes nothing, coincide but little — and that the state is apt to feel its energies crippled by the positive opposition, or at least the non-cooperation of these, its members, in their religious

It may be added, in defence of the consolidation of the supremacy, both civil and ecclesiastical, in the king, that the Romanists them-

¹ See *The Icon Basilike*, chap. xvii., quoted by Warburton in his "*Alliance between Church and State*."

selves could not deny that the early councils (the decrees of which are recognised by the church of Rome to this day) were summoned by the magistrate, and not by the Bishop of Rome; the council of Nice, for example, by Constantine, "who called together a synod (they are the words of Sozomen), and wrote letters to those who were set over the churches, in every place, to attend on a certain day — and there were present (he adds) at this assembly, from the apostolic see, Macarius of Jerusalem, Eustathius, the President of the church of Antioch, (who is reported by Theodoret, it may be observed, as the leader of the council, and the orator who opened it by an address to the emperor,) Alexander of Alexandria, Biton and Bicentius, presbyters of the church of Rome, Julius the bishop being absent, and in all, of bishops about three hundred and twenty, and of presbyters and deacons who attended them no small number." ¹

Thus do we find Scripture lending its sanction to such an alliance between church and state, as the identification of the king with the supreme head of the church implies — early ecclesiastical history declaratory of the authority by which councils were first summoned, giving it the approbation of primitive usage — and the necessity of one mind actuating every member of the body politic, both civil and sacred, dictating its expediency.

¹ See Sozomen, *Hist. Eccles.* lib. i. c. xvii. Euseb. de Vit. Constantin. iii. c. vii. Theodoret, *Hist. Eccles.* i. c. vii.

CHAPTER VIII.

DISSOLUTION OF THE ABBEYS. — CHURCH PROPERTY
— IMMEDIATE CONSEQUENCES OF THE DISSOLU-
TION.

HENRY had by this time fairly passed the Rubicon. After a long pause and much anxiety for the event, he had ventured upon an act which was a declaration of war against the Pope, and he must now on. The strength of the Pontiff lay, as we have seen, in the monastic orders, and in the Mendicants above all. The secular clergy were better subjects, and acknowledged a less divided allegiance. But the monks were so powerful a body in England that the monarch, even in times when he wore far from the *semblance* of a kingly crown, could scarcely balance them. Grievances are alleged against them without end in the "Supplication of Beggars;" "But what remedy?" says the author of this singular address to the King, "Make laws against them? I am in doubt whether ye be able. Are they not stronger in your own parliament-house than yourself? What a number of bishops, abbots, and priors are lords of your parliament! Are not all the learned men of your realm in fee

¹ In the time of Henry III., sixty-four abbots and thirty-six priors were called to parliament; but Edward III. reduced them to twenty-five abbots and two priors; two abbots were added afterwards; so that there were in all twenty-nine who enjoyed this honour till the dissolution.

with them, to speak in your parliament-house for them against your crown, dignity, and commonwealth of your realm, a few of your own learned council only excepted? What law can be made against them that will be available?"¹ When, therefore, the time came for all men to choose their side, and it was clearly seen that this formidable body of regulars would cleave to the Pope to a man, the question was, whether the King should put down the monks, or the monks the King. Henry had no alternative but to try a fall with them, and accordingly, having been slow (considering his temperament) to get into the quarrel, he still acted as Lord Bacon would have advised, and being in it bore himself bravely. Some encouragement in his hazardous undertaking he might possibly derive from the new channel in which public benefactions began now to run, and the feeling it indicated towards the religious houses; for whilst no abbey or priory had been founded for thirty years and upwards, the endowment of schools and colleges was becoming more and more frequent.² Accordingly, he began with the lesser monasteries, of which the income did not exceed 200*l.*, or the inmates twelve in number. There were many reasons for making them his first victims. They were the houses of the *friars*, the most faithful of all the Pope's servants, and the earliest to lift up their voice against the King's supremacy whilst the question of the divorce was in progress. The friars did not stay at home like the easy and well-conditioned monks,

¹ Fox, Acts and Mon. ii. 282.

² Knight's Life of Dean Colet, p. 61.

but had to forage for a living. "Go not from house to house," though a text uttered, as it might seem, with almost a prophetic reference to them, they found it convenient to overlook. Whatever opinions, therefore, they entertained, they had the power of putting in extensive circulation; now that they were disaffected this facility became doubly dangerous. Then they were the most vulnerable of the orders; their corruptions were the grossest. Their vagrant habits threw them amongst temptations, whilst they at the same time withdrew them from wholesome restraints. Abroad they were notorious for intrigues in the hospitable families of the peasants and artisans who received them; and at home they had a treasury of lies, very profitable to themselves whilst their credit was good, but more profitable to their enemies when the fictitious nature of the capital with which they traded was exposed. The Rood of Grace, which would hang its lip when silver was offered to it, and shake its beard merrily when the offering was of gold, was for a time an exchequer; but when the profane hand of a Thomas Cromwell had once opened the figure at Paul's Cross, and displayed to the good citizens of London the wires by which it had been worked, indignation took the place of credulity, and the craftsmen, to whom it had brought no small gain, were justly scandalised. Moreover, the destruction of these lesser houses did not touch in a very tender place the powerful and privileged classes of society. Younger brothers were provided for in the wealthy abbey, but not in the friar's hostel. It was a war upon the weak (so far as property was concerned),

and at a time when commerce and manufactures had not taught the weak but the many their value and their strength; and therefore it was a step attended with less danger. Lastly, it was a measure that served very well as a feeler for one still greater which was behind, but which was as yet studiously disavowed, the suppression of all the monasteries and convents great and small; it was the bristle which made a way for the thread.

Thus the year 1536, saw the downfall of 376 smaller abbeys, and the transfer of the buildings themselves, and of the estates attached thereto, to the King. Here Henry appears for a little while to have paused, partly, perhaps, waiting to see the effect of his first blow, and partly engaged by domestic matters and the judicial destruction of Ann; but he was now too deeply embarked in the work of spoliation to stop long. The greater monasteries had taken the alarm, many of them had already divested themselves of whatever they could detach and turn into money; fines were passed to the detriment of the rent-roll, and furniture and plate sold to the dismantling of the house; so that, upon the whole, the personal property of these greater houses was not found to be near so rich a booty as that of the less, on which the storm had burst unawares. Besides, what had been as yet done was enough to irritate, but not enough to disarm the regulars; Henry had made them implacable without making them impotent; and a rebellion which they were understood secretly to have fomented in various parts of England, and especially in the north (the quarter whence

some of the most serious of the English rebellions have issued), was sufficient to attest at once their spirit and their strength. Once more, therefore the visiters were put in motion. Their commission was made out to examine and report the state of the religious societies yet subsisting; and as the enquiry embraced the purity, the sincerity, and what was more questionable still, the loyalty of the parties, a verdict of guilty, as might be anticipated, was soon returned. In many cases, indeed, the inquisitors were spared their investigation, and some parties feeling their approaching condemnation to be just, and more feeling it to be inevitable, determined to take their sea of troubles at half-tide, and make at once a confession and a surrender. To induce this, however, much machinery was set to work by the commissioners themselves; for it was with a heavy heart, and a strong sense of the injustice of the demand, that the honest head of a religious house resigned that, which "was not his to geve," (as the prior of Henton wrote to his brother, reflecting herein a very general feeling,) "being dedicate to Allmyghtye Gode for service to be done to hys honoure continuallye, with other many goode deeds off daylye charite to christen neyborns."¹ Still some resignations were obtained by promises of pensions; some, again, by threats of exposure, real or pretended. If a superior was after all refractory, he was put out of the way by force; and some disorderly substitute having been previously provided by the visiter, the latter was formally

¹ See Ellis's *Original Letters*, vol. ii. pp. 71. 77. vol. iii. p. 130. Second Series.

ejected, and thus appearances were saved.¹ Nor, probably, were there wanting, amongst the young and adventurous, those who were glad to be released from retreats which, like the Happy Valley, were too free from pain to be pleasurable; and who had found that there was but small satisfaction in the enjoyment "of that fugitive and cloistered virtue, that shrunk from the race when the prize was to be won not without dust and heat."²

Amidst the strife of tongues which those tempestuous times called forth, it is almost hopeless to come at the exact truth. On the one hand, the visitors are charged with inordinate rapacity, with private embezzlement of the vast property lying at their mercy, and even with abusing the opportunities which their commission gave them, and corrupting the nuns. They, on the other hand, retaliated by presenting to the eyes of the people a most revolting picture of the interior of these whited sepulchres (for such they were described to be), fair on the outside, but within full of dead men's bones, and all uncleanness, of spurious relics and sensual sins, and the foulness of the picture helped to relieve the King from the odium of destroying it.

Yet, bad as the monasteries were reported to be, and bad in many instances they probably were (for the system was in some respects radically pernicious), the event proved that they had their redeeming qualities too; and as we know not, says the proverb, what the well is

¹ See an Account of the Ancient and Present State of Shrewsbury. 12mo. p. 107.

² Milton.

worth till it is dry, so was it found after the dissolution, that with all their faults, the monasteries had been the refuge for the destitute, who were now driven to frightful extremities throughout the country, the effect of the suppression being with respect to them the same as would now follow from the sudden abolition of the poor laws ; that they had been the alms-houses, where the aged dependants of more opulent families, the decrepid servant, the decayed artificer, retired as to a home neither uncomfortable nor humiliating ; that they had been the county infirmaries and dispensaries, a knowledge of medicine and of the virtues of herbs being a department of monkish learning (as passages in the old dramatic writers sometimes indicate), and a hospital, and, perhaps, a laboratory, being component parts of a monkish establishment ; that they had been foundling asylums, relieving the state of many orphan and outcast children, and ministering to their necessities, God's ravens in the wilderness (neither so black as they had been represented), bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening¹ ; that they had been inns for the way-faring man, who heard from afar the sound of the vesper-bell, at once inviting him to repose and devotion, and who might sing his matins with the morning star, and go on his way rejoicing ; that they filled up the gap in which the public libraries have since stood, and if their inmates were not very desirous to eat of the tree of knowledge themselves, they had at least the merit of

¹ See Sir H. Spelman's *History and Fate of Sacrilege*, p. 229.

cherishing and preserving it alive for others. Thus do we find in the monastic system a provision made for many of those wants of society which public institutions are now designed to meet perhaps more effectually; and it is not uninteresting to remark, how the great wants of nature still make themselves known, whatever convulsions a nation may undergo, and still conduct it to something like the same course as before, though not, perhaps, under the same name; and when the flood subsides that has covered the earth, to see how Ararat rears his head as he did at the first, and Pihon returns into his wonted channel to water the garden. Well would it be for the peace of the world, if this consideration had its due influence, not an influence that should paralyse but that should moderate; if men would not subject society to needless confusion, whilst they attempt to expel nature by a fork, sure as it is to recoil and recover itself; if they would spare themselves and others the inconvenience of a struggle, where they fight as one beating the air.

The convulsion felt throughout the country on this memorable occasion was probably more violent than any which it has experienced either before or since. The joints of society were thoroughly loosed; a vast proportion of the population was turned adrift upon the wide world, their employment gone, their relief gone too. Seventy-two thousand persons are said to have perished by the hand of the executioner in the reign of King Henry, some made desperate by want, and some made bold by the lawless licence of the times. Cromwell, who was

the King's political adviser throughout this great measure, felt the state rocking under him, and suggested the sale of the abbey lands and tithes at easy prices to the nobles and gentry, that by this means the leading persons in every county might be pledged to support the new order of things, and be tied by the tooth. Thus popish lands, as it was said, made protestant landlords, and thus the *lay improPRIATOR*, a character hitherto almost or altogether unknown, took his beginning. How far the country was a gainer by the exchange of ecclesiastical for other landlords may be questioned. The monks were accused of covetousness; yet it is singular that no legal provision for the poor was wanted so long as the property was in their hands, and that it had scarcely left their hands before it was found necessary to make such a provision; the statute of the 5th of Elizabeth being the first direct one of the kind.¹ The monks were said to deal very thriftily with the incumbents of their livings; yet it is remarkable that no law for preventing the dilapidation of parsonages was called for till the 13th of the same reign. The monks lavished decorations upon their own chapels to the comparative neglect of their country churches, but they never pulled down all the houses on an estate in order that there might be no congregation, and then converted the church into a straw barn, because there was none.² The monks gave a miserable stipend to their vicar, "but now," says one Henry Brinklow, in a curious address to the

¹ Kennett on ImproPRIations, p. 165.

² Strype, Cranmer, p. 412.

members of both houses shortly after the dissolution "there is no vicar at all, but the farmer is vicar and parson altogether; and only an old castaway monk or friar, which can scarcely say his matins, is hired for twenty or thirty shillings, meat and drink; yea, in some places, for meat and drink alone, without any wages. I know," he continues, "and not I alone, but twenty thousand men know, more than five hundred vicarages and parsonages thus well and gospelly served after the new gospel of England."¹ And so crying was this evil, for even great parishes and market towns were utterly destitute of the word of God², that there was nothing for it but to ordain the lowest mechanics to these worthless benefices, no man of education being willing to accept such a pittance; for the endowments, it must be observed, had been seized precisely at the time when the wages of superstition in the shape of fees, which before the Reformation supplied no small part of the vicar's income, were extinguished also, and holy toys were no longer vendible. The cause of religion, however, being found at length to suffer seriously, both from the ignorance and the lives of these preachers, Archbishop Parker enjoined his suffragans to refuse such candidates holy orders, and then pluralities became a bad, but it was the best, or rather the only, alternative.³ Queen Anne lamented and endeavoured to remedy the evil. She discharged all livings under fifty pounds a year, according to an improved valuation which she directed the

¹ Kennett on Improvements, p. 131.

² Dedicat. of Latimer's Sermons, vol. ii. p. ix.

³ Kennett, pp. 158. 184.

bishops and others to make, from the payment of tenths to the exchequer, a tax which had caused many benefices to remain altogether without incumbents ; and by another and still more munificent act, she made over the first-fruits and tenths of such as were undischarged, to the augmentation of small livings ; a fund which, it may be here observed, had been seized by Henry, the successor of the pope in his fees as he was in his supremacy ; hereby doing what in her lay to heal the laceration which the system of lay-impropriations had inflicted on the church, and purchasing for herself, beyond most other sovereigns that have sat upon the throne of England, a good renown. But, in general, this ill-gotten and ill-applied wealth served only to verify the adage, "that the devil's corn goes all to bran." The receivers of the plunder rarely prospered ; and it is observed by Sir H. Spelman, about the year 1616, that on comparing the mansion-houses of twenty-four families of gentlemen in Norfolk, with as many monasteries, all standing together at the dissolution, and all lying within a ring of twelve miles the semi-diameter, he found the former still possessed by the lineal descendants of their original occupants in every instance ; whilst the latter, with two exceptions only, had flung out their owners again and again, some six times over, none less than three, through sale, through default of issue, and very often through great and grievous disasters.¹ Nor was this the opinion of an individual, or of a visionary ; on the contrary, it was very generally entertained by men the

¹ History and Fate of Sacrilege, p. 243.

most sober-minded. Archbishop Whitgift, in his appeal to Queen Elizabeth against the sacrilegious designs of the Earl of Leicester and others, challenges this as a truth "already become visible in many families, that church land, added to an ancient and just inheritance, hath proved like a moth fretting a garment, and secretly consumed both."¹ Lord Burleigh, whose bias was rather that of the Puritan than of the Roman Catholic, cautioned Thomas, his first-born, not to build on an impropriation, as fearing the foundation might hereafter fail.² "I charge you," was one of the three injunctions laid upon his son by Lord Strafford when under sentence of death, "touching church property, never to meddle with it; for the curse of God will follow all them that meddle with such a thing that tends to the destruction of the most apostolical church upon earth."³ And even Selden (no violent advocate of ecclesiastical dues) censures the alienation of tithes. "And let them remember," he writes, "who says, 'It is a destruction for a man to devour what is consecrated.'"⁴ Indeed, during the latter half of the seventeenth century,—whether from compunction,—whether from the attention of the public having been directed to the subject by Archbishop Laud, and by popular treatises which made their appearance about that time,—whether from the experience and notoriety of the evil, and the consequent shame it drew upon its abettors, or from whatever other cause,—many impropriations

¹ Walton's *Life of Hooker*. Eccl. Biog. vol. iv. p. 236.

² Fuller's *Holy and Prof. State*, p. 269.

³ Kennett's *Improp.* p. 438.

⁴ *Id.* 184. Prov. xx. 25.

were voluntarily relinquished, and a very considerable number of vicarages were more or less augmented.¹ Still there is no abuse out of which Providence cannot extract some good. This act of desecration (as it was considered) proved the safety, perhaps, of the yet tottering Protestant cause, under the reign of Queen Mary; for the great proprietors had violent scruples against returning to a form of faith which might entail upon them the surrender of their lands. And though it is probable that the religious establishment of this country, if it had stood at all, would have stood upon firmer ground at this moment, had the Reformation been completed (for it was left sadly imperfect), by the revision instead of the excessive alienation of the revenues of the church; yet, as affairs turned out, that very spoliation, perhaps, sustained the Church of England a second time, when the Puritan lay impropiators threw themselves in the way (whether consistently or not) of the abolition of tithes²; and more unlikely things have happened than that it should do the country the like good office again: for it would require a man of more intrepidity than even the disingenuous Neal (who walks over this incident more delicately than is his custom where there is room for a fling at the church) to draw a distinction between the lay and ecclesiastical tithe-holder, in favour of the former; and to maintain that the right of the one is inviolable, because he does not observe the conditions upon which it was originally founded; whilst that of the other is nugatory, because he does. Certain

¹ Spelman, p. 297.

² Neal, History of the Puritans, vol. iv. p. 55.

it is, that the people were at first very reluctant to transfer the payment of tithes (which they had ever regarded, and which the law had ever taught them to regard, as inseparably connected with religious services,) to laymen¹: and however it may be the fashion of our own times to spare the impropiator, and assail the clergyman, nothing is more true, than that it was not so from the beginning; but, on the contrary, that it was then thought no less an anomaly to pay tenths to the landlord, than it would now be thought so to pay fees for burials and baptisms to the squire. But it must be confessed that the Roman Catholic Church, owing to that entire self-security from which she did not rouse herself till the Philistines were upon her, had in some measure to thank herself for the irreverence with which ecclesiastical property was now treated. Not twelve years before the great overthrow of the monasteries, the pope himself granted Wolsey a bull for the dissolution of several religious houses², and the application of the funds to the erection and endowment of his colleges at Oxford and Ipswich; and indeed, generally, by the diversion of estates from one ecclesiastical use to another, a process perpetually going on, often effected rather for individual advantage than for the public good, and often under circumstances of collusion and contrivance discreditable to all the parties concerned, a feeling of respect for the possessions of the church as exclusive and inalienable was weakened. The tendency of such

¹ Kennett, p. 126.

² Strype makes the number 20; Collier, 40. Collier, ii. 19.

a traffic (however confined to a privileged order) was to make the article itself looked upon in the light of merchandise, and to invite towards it the itching palms of the profane. And even now, amongst other advantages not, to be sure, unalloyed, which the law against simony in some degree secures, — such as the less frequent purchase of livings at high prices, for which interest of money would be sought by an exaction of dues to the uttermost farthing, to the sure destruction of the pastoral character, — such as the better chance hereby offered to meritorious men without influence, of finding a patron when the temptation he would be otherwise under to sell rather than give, is partly taken out of his way ; — besides these advantages there is another, and not the least, in the screen which it interposes between the church and the market, and the total confusion which it prevents between the things of men and the things of God.

Henry proved himself an apt scholar in the lessons which the incautious, not to say unlawful, practice of the church of Rome taught him. And so successfully had he overcome all primitive notions of the honour due to sacred things, that even before the dissolution, he seems to have converted many monasteries into stables ; a scandal of which honest Latimer did not fail to remind him publicly ; conceiving it a monstrous thing, that “ abbeys, which were ordained for the comfort of the poor,” should be kept for the king’s horses ; nor convinced of the contrary by the nobleman (who seems to have been ripe to become an impropiator, as very likely he did) who said to him, “ What hast thou to do with the

king's horses? — horses be the maintenance and part of a king's honour and also of his realm; wherefore, in speaking against them, ye are speaking against the king's honour."¹

Cranmer was not (as may be well believed) an unconcerned spectator of this great revolution in the possessions of the church; but though he agreed with Cromwell in the desire of the dissolution, he differed from him with regard to the application of the proceeds. Indeed, the views they respectively took of the nature of ecclesiastical property do not appear to have coincided. The one was rather acting in a political, the other in a religious spirit. Cromwell was concerned to right the monarchy, Cranmer to save a church. The former was for the suppression of the religious houses, because the supremacy of the crown could not be otherwise secured; the latter had this for his object too, but still more the annihilation of the abuses of purgatory, masses for the dead, saint-worship, and pilgrimage, of all which the abbeys were the incorrigible patrons. So far, therefore, they went hand in hand. But in the disposal of the vast fund which accrued from the confiscation of the church estates, Cranmer did not, like Cromwell and the parliament, regard it as a matter for the king to take his pastime with, according to his own mere will and motion.² Nor would he

¹ Latimer's Sermons, v. i. p. 87.

² See some curious traits of Cromwell's real character collected from his own memoranda, and other authentic sources, in Ellis's *Original Letters*, vol. ii. p. 116. second series, and again, p. 162.: a list of the grants of lands made to him by Henry, is given p. 171. See also Hallam's *Constitutional History*, 8vo. i. 96.; and Sir James Mackintosh's *History of England*, ii. 228.

dissipate, nor did he think it lawful to divert from its original destination, and that the promotion of God's glory, so ample a revenue, and make it over at once, and for secular purposes only, to the crown. He, therefore, was for considering it as still a sacred treasure, to be applied to sacred ends; and out of the old and corrupted monasteries he was desirous to see arise new and better foundations: houses attached to all the cathedrals, to serve as nurseries for the clergy of the diocese in religion and learning; an addition made to the incomes of the inferior class¹; and the number of sees increased, with a corresponding diminution in their extent, that the bishop might be in deed as well as in name the overseer.² To these wise and good propositions Latimer added another, no less commendable, that a few of the greater abbeys should be left for pious and charitable uses. For the priory of Malvern, above all, he intercedes with great earnestness; not that it "should stand in monkery, but so as to be converted to preaching, study, and prayer;" and then he adds, "Alas! my good Lord" (it is to Cromwell that he makes his fruitless appeal), "shall we not see two or three in every shire changed to such remedy?"³ In suggesting these and similar measures, the Reformers felt that they had right on their side. Whether the property of the church had not accumulated to an amount inconvenient to the state, as unduly narrowing the limits within which other professions were left to walk, may be doubted; and therefore Cranmer, with his usual moderation,

¹ Burnet, ii. 45, 46.

² Id. i. 189, 190.

³ Id. i. 227.

consented that the king should resume the lands which the piety (or, as it would be now said, the superstition,) of his ancestors had granted to ecclesiastics, and dispose of them as seemed best to him. But they felt also, that church endowments in general, and tithes in particular, were goods set apart for the promotion of religion from time immemorial, the possessor of a manor erecting upon it a church, and charging it for ever with the maintenance of a man whose business it should be to teach the people upon it the law of God, and thus acknowledging on his own part his tenure to be under God, "the land His, and himself a stranger and sojourner with Him."¹ This was the origin of parishes; the parish co-extensive (as it is still almost always found) with the manor, so that even where the latter chanced to have a part distant and detached, the parish, however inconvenient it may be for pastoral superintendence and instruction, usually claims it too. The fulfilment of the conditions annexed to these grants, it was only equitable that the donor and his heirs should exact and regulate; they were the natural guardians of the charities; and when the lapse of years, the course of events, and public convenience, had caused this guardianship to devolve upon the state, the state, like any other guardian, had a right to superintend the trust so as to carry into effect the designs of the donor, but no right whatever to alienate it, apply it to purposes of its own, and thereby frustrate those intentions. It had a right, for instance, to provide the best religious instruction which was

¹ Levit. xxv. 23.

to be had, even though it was such as the benefactor had not contemplated; and to exclude such as was found, on a more intimate knowledge of the subject, to be erroneous, even though it was such as the benefactor had sanctioned; it being obvious that his intention was to guide, not to mislead, those for whom he had shown so lively an interest; but it had no right to withhold all religious instruction whatever, dispose of the trust to the best bidder, and putting the produce in its pocket, say that it was corban. If a professorship of astronomy had been founded by some lover of the science when the system of Ptolemy was in the ascendant, surely the trustees of his foundation would be thought to satisfy his manes best by giving it to a man who would now show his pupils a more excellent way, and that Newton was right and Ptolemy wrong, though contrary to the ill-informed notions of the founder himself, and though he, like the Jesuits¹, would possibly have denounced the innovation as heretical; but they would not be thought to execute their trust to his satisfaction or to their own credit, if they voted astronomy in general to be mere moonshine, and spent the fund that was set apart for its encouragement in an annual dinner. Yet this is the doctrine with regard to the responsibility of the state for the due preservation of the church establishment which is often in these days preached, as though the state were *owners* of church property instead of its *trustees*, and it was lawful for the state to do

¹ See the characteristic declaration prefixed to the third volume of the Jesuits' edition of Newton's *Principia*.

what it would with that which it never gave, and which it never had to give.¹ But might overcomes right —

There is a simple plan,
That they shall take, who have the power,
And they shall keep who can.

And accordingly the council of Cromwell prevailed with the king and the courtiers, and Cranmer and Latimer had nothing to do but to submit and make the most of such resources as were left. Indeed, the whole aspect of the Reformation exhibits marks of the conflict of principles, under which it was brought about. The best and the worst men were busy in promoting it, each party with a purpose of their own; and its graces and imperfections alike testify that the hands which were concerned in it were not of one fashion; that its walls, like those of the second Jerusalem, arose amidst fightings from without, "the builders every one having his sword girded by his side, and so building."² Happy, indeed, it was that such master-builders were to be found: had not this wise and conservative party been at hand, a party intent upon what could be spared as well as what must be sacrificed,—what could be restored, as well as what must be destroyed utterly,—the vulgar handlers of axe and hammer would have cast all to the ground, and the country would have risen from its paroxysm, rid indeed of superstition, but with nothing for a substitute, and the latter state of the nation would have been worse than the

¹ See an excellent pamphlet, entitled "The Revenues of the Church not a Burden to the Public." 1830.

² Nehemiah iv. 18.

first. As it was, the troubled fountain of the Reformation sent forth streams, the one of sweet, the other of bitter waters ; and as the principles of the blessed martyrs, who acted in it their immortal parts, issued out in the establishment of a church of apostolic doctrines, so did other principles, now stirred, find their consummation (if indeed they found it then) in the eventual subversion of that church, and with it, of the throne.

The progress of the Reformation was attended (as all great national convulsions are) with many and sad excesses. The work of destruction, when long continued, is in itself a thing which hardens the heart ; and the Reformation was full of it. Monk and nun turned out of house and home, pensioned indeed, but (except in the case of superiors, who were treated with more lenity) pensioned with a miserable equivalent ; their dwelling-places, beautiful as many of them were, laid low, that all hope of return might be cut off ; their cells surrendered to the bats and owls ; their chapels made a portion for foxes, the mosaic pavements torn up, the painted windows dashed in pieces, the bells gambled for, or sold into Russia and other countries¹, though often before they reached their destination buried in the ocean — all and utterly dismantled, save where, happening to be parish churches also, as was the case at St. Alban's, Tewkesbury, Malvern, and elsewhere, they were rescued in whole, or in part, from Henry's harpies, by the petitions or the pecuniary contributions of the pious in-

¹ Some Account of Shrewsbury, p. 128.

habitants¹; libraries, of which most monasteries contained one, treated by their new possessors with barbaric contempt; "some books reserved for their jakes, some to scour their candlesticks, some to rub their boots, some sold to the grocers and soap-boilers, and some sent over sea to book-binders, not in small numbers, but at times whole shipsful, to the wondering of foreign nations; a single merchant purchasing at forty shillings a piece two noble libraries to be used as grey-paper, and such as having already sufficed for ten years were abundantly enough (says the eye-witness whose words are here quoted) for many years more²;" these were some of the coarser features of those times; howbeit there were many besides these. For the churches were now treated with gross irreverence; horses and mules were led through them; they were profaned by dogs and hawks, by doves and owls, by stares and choughs³; they were plundered of their plate by churchwardens, or other powerful parishioners⁴, who might argue, that if they spared, others would spoil; or who might wish ill to the cause of the Reformation, and take such means to scandalise it. London, says Latimer, was never so full of ill; charity was waxen cold in it. "Oh, London, London," cries this earnest old man, "repent, repent! for I think God more

¹ See the Petition of the Inhabitants of Holm Cultram, in Cumberland, to Cromwell, praying for the preservation of the abbey church there, A. D. 1538. Ellis's Original Letters, ii. 89.

² Spelman, Hist. and Fate of Sacrilege, p. 202. The extract is from a letter of John Bale to Leland.

³ Homily on Keeping clean of Churches.

⁴ Strype's Cranmer, 177.

displeased with London, than he ever was with the city of Nebo." ¹ Such was the profligacy of its youth, that he marvels the earth gaped not to swallow it up. There were many that denied the immortality of the soul, and the existence of a heaven or a hell. ² Manly sports and pastimes had been exchanged for the gaming-table. Divorces, even amongst the inferior classes of society, were become common; for marriage being declared no sacrament, probably many chose to interpret the declaration to mean that it was no bond. ³ The elementary bread of the eucharist was expressed by base and indecent nicknames. ⁴ The alehouses were filled with profane disputants upon the mysteries of our faith, and the dissolute scoffers made songs upon them ⁵: "Green Sleeves," "Maggy Lauder," and "John Anderson my Jo," with numbers more, were all of this class of compositions; and psalms (in this instance, perhaps, without any intentional levity) were set to hornpipes. To crown all, a multitude of disaffected persons were at large in the country, speaking evil of dignities, and exciting the idle, the hungry, and the aggrieved, to riot and rebellion; bearding the government with audacious demands of changes, both civil and ecclesiastical, to be made at their pleasure, couched in language the most imperative and insolent; "such," Cranmer observes in his answer to them, "as was not at any time used

¹ Latimer's Sermons, i. 60, 61. Id. i. 176.

² Id. i. 167.

³ Id. i. 176. 220.

⁴ Strype's Cranmer, 175.

⁵ Fox, 1048. Percy's Reliques of English Poetry, ii. 291. Shakspeare's Winter's Tale, act iv. sc. 2.

of subjects to their prince since the beginning of the world." ¹

Meanwhile, and in the midst of this general relaxation of morals, the fanatic was abroad: it was the very field for him; the standing corn of the Philistines was not better fitted for the foxes and firebrands. There were Predestinarians, who preached that the elect could not sin, nor the regenerate fall from grace. Their religion, says a chaplain of Cranmer, "consisted in words and disputations; in Christian acts and godly deeds nothing at all." ² There were Antinomians, who taught that the "chosen" were at liberty to help themselves to such a share of this world's goods as their necessities required; and that however they might sin in their outward man, in the inner man they sinned not. ³ There were Anabaptists, who, besides their theological dogma, acknowledged no judge or magistrate, no right of war or of capital punishment. ⁴ There were Fifth-monarchy men. ⁵ There were Arians. There were Unitarians, who denied the divinity of the second and third persons of the Trinity, and limited the benefits of Christ's coming to the knowledge he gave mankind of the true God. ⁶ There were men of the family of *Love*, or Davidians as they were called, from one David George, who made himself sometimes Christ, and sometimes the Holy Ghost. ⁷ There were Libertines, of whose precise tenets we are

¹ *Strype*, Append. 88.

² *Strype's Cranmer*, 178. 291.

³ *Id.* 178.

⁴ *Latimer's Sermons*, i. 135. 249.; ii. 162, 163.

⁵ *Strype's Cranmer*, 203.

⁶ *Id.* 179.

⁷ *Id.* 291.

not informed, together with other sects, some of native, some of exotic growth, but all combining a little sedition with not a little conceit.

Here, then, were the beginnings of sorrows laid up in store for the hapless Charles, and the church of which he was the head, and, in his later and more sobered years, the ornament. Now was the nation fly-blown; and it was only wanted that the days should be fulfilled when the hornets would take wing, and sting it into madness. So true it is that the sin of a government, like that of an individual, does eventually find it out. Long it may tarry before it manifests itself in its effects, but a century in the life of a nation is but a span; and he who destroyed the Amalekites in the time of Saul for the transgression of the Amalekites in the time of Moses, suffering his wrath to sleep four hundred years, and then to burst out, is still the God of the nations, and deals with them still after the same fashion, though the natural consequences of the offence may serve Him for the ministers of his tardy vengeance. For what had the church under its new discipline and organisation to oppose to these restless and inquisitive spirits? Could it not meet the evil, and extinguish it, whilst it was yet done in the green tree? Alas! its clergy were unfit for so delicate and difficult a work. The Reformation, owing to the violence which had attended and disgraced a noble cause, had depressed them as a body: doubtless there were of their number many most able men; none greater than some of them have been since born of woman; but with the generality it was very far otherwise. The appropriation system

now began to tell its tale. The universities and schools had been comparatively deserted. It was with extreme difficulty that men could now be found to preach at Paul's Cross, once the object of so much clerical ambition. About the year 1544, Bonner writes to Parker, then master of Corpus, importuning him to send him help from Cambridge, and expressing his surprise that candidates should be lacking for such an office.¹ — "I think there be at this day," says Latimer, in the middle of Edward VI.'s reign, "ten thousand students less than were within these twenty years."² The clerical profession no longer held out the same inducements to men of liberal acquirements and liberal minds to enter it. A very considerable proportion of the parishes of England were served by priests utterly ignorant and unlettered. The patrons had given their benefices to their menials as wages; to their gardeners, to the keepers of their hawks and hounds, — these were the incumbents³; or else, they had let in fee both glebe and parsonage, so that whoever was presented would have neither roof to dwell under nor land to live upon; but too happy if his vicarial tithes afforded him a chamber at an alehouse, and the worshipful society of the dicers and drinkers who frequented it⁴; nay, perhaps himself the landlord.⁵ The questions addressed by Bishop Hooper to his clergy on his primary visitation are but too

¹ Strype's *Life of Parker*, p. 17. fol. ed.

² Latimer's *Sermons*, i. 246.

³ *Id.* i. 266.

⁴ *Id.* i. 183. See also the lxxvth Canon.

⁵ *Id.* ii. 58.

sadly characteristic of the condition of these shepherds of the people: — “How many commandments? Where written? Can you say them by heart? What are the articles of the Christian faith? Can you repeat them? Can you recite the Lord’s Prayer? How do you know it to be the Lord’s Prayer?”¹ Were these the men to uphold church and state, and in critical times too? or rather were they not the men to render both contemptible in any times?

The rising party of the Puritans, an active minority, busy rather than powerful in the Scriptures, given to subtle and unprofitable questions, would scoff at such preachers, and teach their hearers to scoff at them too; and this they not only could do, but did; and with the more mischievous effect, because (as it has been already said) the districts best peopled and most intelligent, the towns, were precisely the very poorest livings in the kingdom, and were, therefore, the very worst supplied with ministers²; if, indeed, they were supplied at all, and not rather abandoned to whatever wolf might feel disposed to make the fold his prey, the laity themselves actually left to bury their own dead.³ The deep and lasting wound which such a clergy inflicted upon the character and credit of the church is scarcely to be described. It had not recovered itself in the days of Herbert, who was thought by his worldly-minded friends “to have lost himself in an humble way” when he took orders; and who himself (which is more to the purpose), unam-

¹ Strype’s Cranmer, p. 216.

² Latimer, i. 93.

³ See Bishop Jewel’s Sermon on Haggai, i. 2. near the end.

bitious of distinction as he was become, casually speaks of his profession in his "Country Parson" as one of general ignominy.¹ It required the Augustan age of our divines, — the age of a Hall, an Andrews, a Hammond, a Sanderson, a Taylor, a Barrow, a South, — to interpose itself, in order that public opinion, viewing the Church of England through such a medium, might be compelled to do it tardy justice, and at length to reverence an establishment which had given birth to so much piety, so much learning, so much genius, so much wisdom, and so much wit.

Nor was it merely the ignorance of churchmen that gave the rising sectaries such advantage; — there was treachery in the camp. Many of the old clergy, conforming to the innovations that had been made, (indeed, during Henry's reign, those in doctrine were not very considerable,) still occupied the pulpits, but without any love for their present position. On the contrary, it was naturally not unpleasant to them to see the elements of discord let loose, and like the "anarch old," to watch the strife in silence, by which they might themselves hope in the end again to reign. Homilies were provided, that sound and at any rate harmless doctrine might be propounded to the people. They were, however, often but "homely handled," to speak in Latimer's vein²; for, if "the priest were naught, he would so hack and chop them, that it was as good for his hearers to be without them for any word that should be understood." Neither were these

¹ Eccles. Biography, iv. 508. "Country Parson," p. 95. 12mo. ch. xxviii.

² Latimer's Sermons, i. 105.

conformists the most intelligent of the Roman Catholic teachers; on the contrary, they were in general of the mendicant orders, their recommendation being that they would work cheap, and spare the pocket of the patron. Neither were they the most reputable; for, as a further proof of the honest motives which had actuated many in their spoliation of the church, the very men who had been denounced as unfit to live whilst they were monks, were now inducted into benefices and stalls by the parties to whom the spiritual welfare of the people, forsooth, had been so dear an object, in order that they might be thus relieved from the payment of the pitiful pension with which their property was charged for their support.¹

These are miserable and disgusting details; but if they are so to write and read, what must they have been to Cranmer and his colleagues to witness! How must their righteous souls have been vexed! Those persons who give to our reformers credit for the courage which they displayed in the flames, and regard their sufferings as confined to their martyrdom, do them poor justice. To jostle with so many offensive obstacles for so many long years; to persevere unto the end in the midst of so much to thwart, to disappoint, to irritate; to feel themselves earnest, sincere, and single-hearted, and to have to encounter so much hypocrisy, double-dealing, and pretence; to work their weary way through a sordid and mercenary generation, who had a zeal for God's service on their tongues, but who in

¹ Burnet, Pref. ii. 14. Strype's Cranmer, p. 36.

their hearts admired nothing of heaven save the riches of its pavement; to see the goodly fruits of all their labours likely to perish through sectarian divisions, which might very probably have been healed by timely precaution, and the adoption (at some cost to be sure) of measures which they were the first to recommend; these were trials by that slow fire of temptation which it requires a stout heart and a high principle to sustain, and though there might be many (as Milton ungenerously and ungratefully puts it) who would give their bodies to be burned, if the occasion demanded it, yet there would be few, who, so tried, would find themselves so unwearied in well-doing.

They, however, have their reward; and it was a noble prize for which they struggled. They are themselves gone to heaven in their chariot of fire, and to their country they have bequeathed as a mantle, a free use of the Bible, a reasonable faith, a pure ritual, principles of toleration, liberty of conscience, and that virtue which goeth out of all these things, whereby a nation is made to put forth its otherwise dormant strength in the prosecution of commerce, of manufactures, of agriculture, of science, and of whatever belongs to an extinguishable enterprise.

CHAPTER IX.

CROMWELL.—GARDINER.—BONNER.—THE ACT OF
THE SIX ARTICLES.—SERMONS OF THOSE DAYS.—
PROPOSED DISPOSAL OF ECCLESIASTICAL PROPERTY.
—ARTICLES OF 1536.—THE BIBLE IN CHURCHES.
—BISHOPS' DOOK.—KING'S BOOK.

THE two great measures of the supremacy, and the suppression of the abbeys had been carried, but with haste and no small violence; and now came the recoil. It pertained to the king's prerogative that the pope should be deposed, and to his exchequer that the monasteries should be despoiled: so far, therefore, Henry was a cordial reformer. Churchwork is said in general to go up on crutches, and to come down post; and the present case furnishes no exception to the proverb: for now the king wellnigh deserted the cause in which he had been so actively engaged, and having undone so much of the old religion, was disposed to do nothing for the new; but, betaking himself to catholic advisers, surrendered himself for the most part into their hands during the remainder of his reign. For though we shall have occasion to notice some acts of grace towards the reformed faith, they are few and feeble, suggested by a passing wish to preserve something of consistency, by momentary caprice, or by the force of condition

parties, which, causing him to fall into a place where two seas met, constrained him at least to be still.

The abbeyes had scarcely been disposed of, when Cromwell, the political agent of the reformation, and the individual who had succeeded to the greatest share of Wolsey's influence over the king, fell into disgrace. After the untimely death of Jane Seymour, he had ventured (a measure requiring as much personal courage as the suppression of the monasteries) to negotiate a match for his capricious master; a match which, it was thought, would bind Henry still more closely with the Protestant cause, by connecting him with the Lutheran princes of Germany. But Cromwell's good genius had here forsaken him. Anne of Cleves was not found to answer to the agreeable portrait which Holbein had painted of her; on the contrary, she was ill-favoured; moreover she spoke Dutch, a language of which the king was ignorant; and had never learned music, of which he was passionately fond. Henry became disgusted, and Cromwell's position became precarious. Other ostensible causes were of course put forward to justify the ruin of this minister; treason and heresy were the leading-horses, but the marriage was the snare. "The weight that pulled him down was there." That Henry gave him an earldom after this period, is true enough; it might be to throw dust in the eyes of the suspicious; it certainly proved but a garland to deck the victim for the altar. And now Gardiner, bishop of Winchester, "that fox," who had been long upon the watch to supplant him, saw that his opportunity was come,

and profited by it. Gardiner and Cromwell had known each other from early years, having been brought up together, and of nearly the same standing in the household of cardinal Wolsey; but there was not room upon the stage for both of them at a time; and Cromwell having soon on his part declared for the Reformation, had the king with him; and whilst this was the case, the churchman lay by. Cromwell seems to have owed him no good-will, and to have taken no pains to disguise his sentiments. Having the king's ear, he sent Bonner to supersede him as ambassador in France; and from the letters of that monster (as time-serving then as he was afterwards bloody-minded), and which are all meant to play up to the known tastes or prejudices of his patron, it is plain enough that Gardiner was disliked and distrusted by Cromwell, whom he in his turn was as studious to affront by the insults which he heaped upon this his mean-spirited vassal, and the savage ill-humour with which he resigned to him his office. He returned, however, to England; and as a man changes his latitude, but not his temper, who crosses the seas, Gardiner still continued to be a thorn in Cromwell's side; and on a comparison of dates, it will be seen that he had scarcely set foot in England before a change began to manifest itself in the counsels of the king, and Cromwell's influence, even long before he was attainted, to decline. What, indeed, could induce the latter to be instrumental to his recal from France (as Fox implies he was), and thereby to put his enemy in a situation where he could do him more mischief, it is vain at this time of day to

enquire; but it seems probable that Gardiner was thought to be playing a game of his own in his master's service; and to be accommodating the foreign relations of his country to a policy that suited himself, or at least the cause which he had at heart.¹ But in truth it must have been a very difficult matter for a minister of those times to have found the right place for the bishop of Winchester, whose talents were such, that it was alike unsafe to use or to refuse them. The character of this double-edged tool the king had learned to appreciate when it was too late; and on making a fresh will shortly before his death, showed no disposition to meddle with it more, by excluding Gardiner from the number of his executors (for in a former will, which was now cancelled, his name was found amongst them), and on being reminded of the omission by sir Anthony Browne, he replied, that he had acted advisedly, seeing that "if he were in his testament he would cumber them all."²

Gardiner, however, once dominant, maintained the ascendancy of the Romish party and principles to the last of Henry's reign. He had indeed, powerful coadjutors. The Howards were devoted to the same cause; and the natural influence of that distinguished house was then accidentally increased by the alliance which the king was about to form with one of its members. Then, again, he strengthened himself by the king's fears. If he found him making any demonstrations of a nearer approach to the Reformers, he could threaten him with the displeasure of the emperor, and picture

¹ Fox's Acts and Mon. ii. 380.

² Fox, ii. 647.

to him the jealousy with which he was already regarded by the European powers, as the royal ringleader of heresy. The expectation too of a general council shortly to be held for the settlement of religious differences, and which finally fixed itself at Trent, threw its weight into the same scale. Henry might think it his policy not to commit himself farther with the faithful sons of the church till the storm was overpast. Nor was it a slight matter in favour of Gardiner, that the king, in a rash hour, had become an author; that his sentiments on the leading doctrines of the Reformers were put upon irrevocable record; and that now to flinch from his positions would be to resign the laurels which his reputed scholarship had won for him; and, what was still less to his taste, would be to pronounce that in matters of opinion even he himself was not infallible. No man was better qualified to take advantage of these or any other incidents which might make for his object than Gardiner, the most astute politician of his time; while Cranmer, on the other hand, had nothing to oppose to him but the spirit of an Israelite indeed, alike unfit for contriving plots himself, or for discovering them in another; for of him it might have been said, as it was said of one of his most conspicuous successors in the see of Canterbury (though a character upon the whole very different from his), that "too secure in a good conscience, and most sincere worthy intention, with which no man was ever more plentifully replenished, he thought he could manage and discharge the place and office of the greatest minister in the court without any other friendship or support than what

the splendour of a pious life and his accomplished integrity would reconcile to him; which was an unskilful measure," adds the great historian, whose experience it is presumptuous to question, yet whose conclusion it is painful to admit, "in a licentious age, and may deceive a good man in the best of times that shall succeed; which exposed him to such a torrent of adversity and misery, as we shall have too natural an occasion to lament in the following discourse, in which it will be more reasonable to enlarge of his singular abilities and immense virtue."¹ Soon had Cranmer reason to exclaim of those now admitted into the king's counsels, "Ye are too hard for me!" for now is passed the act of the Six Articles (the whip with six strings as it was called), the death-warrant of so many innocent men, whereby, 1. the doctrine of transubstantiation was established by law; 2. the communion in both kinds excluded; 3. the marriage of priests forbidden; 4. vows of celibacy declared obligatory; 5. private masses for souls in purgatory upheld; and 6. auricular confession pronounced expedient, and necessary to be retained. The penalties annexed to the breach of these decrees being, for the first, to be burnt as a heretic, for the others to be hanged as a felon, and in all cases to forfeit lands and goods to the king as a traitor. Against these sanguinary articles Cranmer lifted up his voice in parliament for three days together in vain. He, on that occasion, was acknowledged by his opponents to have played a noble part; and the king, whose redeeming virtue it was to deal

¹ Clarendon's Hist. of the Rebellion, i. 102.

kindly with this single-hearted man, expressed his sense of the zeal, the honesty, and the learning with which he had withstood court and parliament to the face, by commanding the chief lords to dine with the archbishop at Lambeth after the bill was passed, and to "signify unto him that it was the king's pleasure that all should in his Highness' behalf cherish, comfort, and animate him."¹ The king, who understood the beauty of his character, was faithful to his pledge, however faithless were some of his messengers; and within two years after, when two several attempts were made—the one by the clergy, the other by the council, and both probably by Gardiner,—to bring the archbishop under the operation of this cruel act, and so to run him down, Henry generously interposed, and casting his sceptre before the pack that was open-mouthed to tear this noble quarry in pieces, called them off, and rescued the victim.² It is singular, and characteristic of the man, and of his unsuspecting temperament, that in both instances his sovereign was the first person to apprise him of his danger; in the one case calling him into his barge, as he passed by Lambeth Bridge, and addressing him—"O my cousin, now I know who is the greatest heretic in Kent," and thereupon putting him in possession of the charges of his accusers, and giving him directions for vindicating his own innocence, and bringing his enemies to shame; in the other case sending for him out of bed at midnight, and acquainting him that the council had demanded his commitment to the Tower, as being one who sowed heresy and sedition throughout

¹ Fox, ii. 508.² Strype's *Cranmer*, pp. 114. 118.

the realm, and that the next day the deed was to be done. What follows is a scene of very touching beauty, whether as given by Fox or Strype; and as the incident is full of dramatic effect, it is happy that Shakspeare has set upon it his own mark, and thereby rescued it from the clownish hand of any ordinary playwright. At the same time it may be remarked, that his characters have their parts allotted to them without any very strict attention to historical fidelity, and sometimes in violation of it. Whether our

et, like those of Italy, both ancient and modern, had his own favourites amongst the great of the country, and so doled out his measures of immortality or infamy accordingly;—whether the popularity of the reigning queen did not influence the estimation in which the memory of her father's courtiers was held; or whether, which is the most probable, Shakspeare, with his usual indifference to the minuter matters of his drama, did not put words into the mouths of his speakers somewhat at random, and without much concern as to their being strictly the property of the individual bishop, earl, or duke, who was made to utter them;—it suffices it to say, in the language of our martyr-historist, that when the king had spoke his mind, the archbishop knelt down and said, “I am content, if it please your Grace, with all my heart to go thither at your Highness's commandment; and I most humbly thank your Majesty that I may come to my trial; for there be that have in many ways slandered me, and now this way I hope to try myself not worthy of such report.” The king, perceiving the man's uprightness, joined with such simplicity, said, “Oh Lord! what a

man be you ! what simplicity is in you ! I had thought that you would rather have sued to us to have taken the pains to have heard you and your accusers together for your trial, without any such endurance. Do you know what state you be in with the whole world ? and how many great enemies you have ? Do you not consider what an easy thing it is to procure three or four false knaves to witness against you ? Think you to have better luck that way than your master Christ had !"¹

With these and other words to the same effect, the king gave him his ring, which in case of extremity he might produce at the council, and by virtue of it appeal to Cæsar. He did so, and thus Cranmer escaped out of their hands. But all had not the same friend, nor therefore the same fortune ; for it is to be observed, that the commissioners appointed to carry the Six Articles into execution did not confine their investigations to offences coming directly under the act, but, erecting themselves into a kind of inquisition-general, they took cognisance of all that was done after a manner which they called heresy, whatever it might be ; and neglect of confession in Lent, absence from church, forbearing to creep to the cross on Good Friday, neglecting the use of the rosary, eating meat at interdicted seasons, and the like, were all misdemeanors fetched within the compass of this cruel drag-net of the Six Articles. Accordingly, the prisons of London were gorged with culprits ; for now an opportunity was afforded of raking up old suspicions, and putting all upon their pur-

¹ Eccles. Biog. iii. 479.

² Fox, ii. 530. et seq.

gation. Many are the affecting stories of those days which have come down to us;—glimpses of the domestic troubles of an age called so loudly to bear the cross. The meetings by stealth amongst the friends of the common cause, amongst the brethren (as they named themselves, after the manner of the early Christians); a fraternity, for instance, of students at Oxford, not, like Wesley's little society in the same place, taking joyfully the persecution of a tolerant age, which conferred distinction at an easy rate; but adopting every precaution to walk unseen, and all not enough; trusting their lives to each other's hands; abetting the escape; supplying the disguise; recommending the fugitive to some distant and less suspected brother; kneeling with him before he went his way, to beg God's blessing upon his enterprise; bidding him farewell with sorrowful heart and sad foreboding that they should see his face in the flesh no more; baffling the enquiry of the pursuer; risking the character and fate of an accomplice; braving the rack rather than betray the innocent blood; dying by inches in the dungeon, the feet in the stocks, the neck and legs crussed together by some devilish engine ("the devil on the neck") which contracted with the writhings of the sufferer, till his frame was crushed within the iron grasp!—these are some of the silent horrors of those dreadful days, of which it is impossible to read, without thankfulness to Providence that our lot has been cast on times of greater charity; and without confessing that, grievous as the evil is of capricious divisions upon

¹ Fox. See the story of Garret, ii. 517., and of Porter, ii. 556.

religious questions, it is far less than that of barbarous coercion to unanimity; and bad as the spirit is, wherever it exists, which would preach Christ only of envy and strife, it is after all better than that which would make a way for his reception by fire from heaven.

But though many of the reformers thus kept their opinions to themselves, or only communicated them to their confidential companions, and when the doors were shut; there were others of a more intrepid spirit, who saved the commissioners the necessity of resorting to force or fraud for their conviction, by publicly contending for the faith, and even carrying the war into the enemy's borders. A martyr of this kind was Dr. Barnes: he preached openly at Paul's Cross, where he upheld the doctrine of justification by faith only, (a tenet that seems to have been almost as unpalatable to the Roman Catholics as a renunciation of transubstantiation itself,) and challenged Gardiner to the controversy, against whom indeed this sermon was directed, in reply to one which he had delivered from the same popular pulpit shortly before. There is a passage in his discourse very expressive of the rude style of preaching which in those days prevailed, and which the friars in Italy, and probably elsewhere, have not yet entirely abandoned. Barnes calls upon Stephen Gardiner by name to answer him; alluding in "a pleasant allegory" (as John Fox expresses it — an opinion to which the priests in Spanish America would still subscribe) to a cock-fight, wherein he likens Gardiner to a fighting cock, and himself to another, and reproaches his antagonist with lacking

good spurs, as being a *garden-cock* ; then shifting his joke, he taxes him with being a bad *gardener*, as having set evil herbs in the garden of God's Scriptures ; and once more changing his weapon, he accuses him of a want of logic and grammar-rules ; alleging, in reference to the act of the Six Articles, that if he had expressed himself in the schools as he had done at the Cross, he would have given him six stripes.¹ Latimer's sermons, almost the only complete specimens we have of the pulpit oratory of that time, are full of the same familiar, not to say mean, images, — tales of Robin Hood, or of the Godwin Sands, or of an execution at Oxford, or of the woman going to church at St. Thomas of Acres, because she could not get a wink of sleep in any other place, — mixed up with puns the most idle and similes the most unsavoury.² Two other sermons we have seen of the same date, by one Thomas Lewer, a master of St. John's College, Cambridge, preached the one at Paul's Cross, the other before the king, and both in the year 1550 ; and these are not much less conversational in their tone than those of Latimer. The coarse material of hortatory theology at the Reformation and before it, imparts its character in a degree to our Homilies, which, however full of sound doctrine and wholesome advice, would often not a little shock the sense of ears polite, were they to be faithfully delivered in our churches. And later still, Fuller tells us, in his *History of the University*

¹ Fox, ii. 525.

² See Latimer's Sermons, ed. 187. 227. 193. 181. ; also Fox, ii. 535., the sermon of one Seton, on Justification by Faith only.

of Cambridge, of a country parson in his time who preached at St. Mary's, on the words, "God hath *dealt* to every one the measure of faith" (Rom. xii. 3.); when, in a fond imitation, as he says, of Latimer's famous card sermons, he followed out the metaphor of *dealing*; that men should play *above-board*, or avoid dissimulation; not *pocket* the cards, or improve their gifts; *follow suit*, that is, wear the surplice, and conform to ceremonies.¹ Jeremy Taylor sometimes narrowly escapes the like extravagance. South approaches it still more frequently, and almost with as little ceremony as would have been used a century earlier; and even in the majestic and sober Barrow, expressions, if not figures, occasionally startle us, as below the dignity of the pulpit and the gravity of the Christian teacher. Even he does not scruple to talk of "time rendering God's goodness more precious, as it doth gold and wine," — of the difficulty of curing a wounded reputation, and "spreading the plaster so far as the sore hath reached," — of "the fox, who said that the grapes were sour, because he could not reach them; and that the hare was dry meat, because he could not catch it," — of the "who would have his sickle in another's corn, or an oar in another's boat, being in no condition to wonder if his fingers be *ripped*," — of "liberality being the most beneficial traffic that can be, seeing that it is bringing our wares to the best market, letting out our money to the best hands; God repaying us with vast usury, an hundred to one being the rate he allows at present, and above

¹ Hist. of Cambridge, p. 103.

a hundred millions to one the rate he will render hereafter, so that if we will be merchants this way, we shall be sure to thrive.”¹ Soon after this time pulpit oratory began to go upon stilts; and, becoming more remote from the conceptions and phraseology of the vulgar; lost much of its interest with them, and influence over them, and at length made way for the field-preacher, who spoke to them once again, as it were, in the Hebrew tongue, to which they gave the more silence. Whilst, however, we may regret the want of the nervous asperity of style and profusion of matter of the days of Barrow, we may congratulate ourselves upon our escape from the old-wives’ tales of the days of Latimer. They had their origin in a very different state of society, and a very different condition of the church. Something must be ascribed to the general rudeness of an age when bear-baiting was the amusement which a queen provided for the foreign ambassadors, and of which herself and her court were willing spectators; — when a fool was a part of the establishment even of the most refined households, and his uncouth jokes were paid for by the year; — when the martyr in prison could in all sober sadness address words of comfort to his fellow-sufferer, “*Green*,” as “a dainty dish for the Lord’s own tooth;” or to *Philpot*, as “a pot filled with the most precious liquor;” — and when at the stake, not think it out of character, or out of season, to crack a jest upon his own dress or his own corpulence. Something, again, must be imputed to the circumstances under which a preacher before

¹ Barrow’s Works, fol. ed. i. 94. 260, 267. 305. 456.

the Reformation, and indeed for many years subsequent to it, delivered his sermon. It was very frequently in the open air that he spake, — from the steps of a cross, as at Paul's Cross, the most famous of the day; the congregation assembling around it, and only adjourning to the "shrouds" (as some of the vaults of the church were called) when the weather was unfavourable. Latimer's sermons before Edward VI. were preached in a garden of the palace of Westminster, the people having admission, and the king hearing them from one of his windows.¹ The effect of such an arrangement was, to divest sermons of all form; to render them vernacular and colloquial: they were, in fact, ~~at~~ ^{what} their name indicates — not harangues, not orations, but unwritten discourses, or at most from notes², and partook of all the characteristics of ordinary discourse; the preaching from "bosom sermons," or from writing, being considered a lifeless practice before the Reformation, and a fit subject of reproach; and the origin of it was, perhaps, no other than an apprehension of the preacher, in those days of jealousy, lest he should be caught in his words, and misrepresented to those in power, which induced him to commit his thoughts to paper; or a determination of his superiors that he should ~~be~~ ^{be} held to whatever he uttered from the pulpit, which compelled him to do ~~so~~.

¹ Latimer's Sermons, i. 163.

² Fox, ii. 684. ; where Bonner defends himself for having overlooked some of the king's injunctions in his sermon, by reason of his book of notes having "in his sermon-time fallen away from him."

³ See Eccles. Biog. i. 303.

Something, again, is to be referred to the connection which subsisted in Roman Catholic times between the church and the stage. The Bible-histories were dramatised; a generation which had not the Scriptures to read, and could not have read them if they had, were taught by theatrical representation. It was upon this principle that the use of images was defended: they were said to be the poor man's books; and miracle plays were actually performed in the churches. This ill-omened union, however, without exalting the theatre, debased theology, and constantly justified the apprehensions which Andrew Marvel expressed in the particular instance of *Paradise Lost*, lest the poet

"Should ruin (for he saw him strong)
The sacred truths to fable and old song ;"—

or lest,

—— "if a work so infinite be spann'd,
Jealous he was that some less skilful hand
(Such as disquiet always what is well,
And by ill imitating would excel)
Might hence presume the whole creation's day,
To change its scenes, and show it in a play."

Lastly, much of this coarseness and levity, which, according to our present notions, seems to border on the profane, was to be put to the account of the friars. They were the popular preachers of their day. Their Lent sermons attracted multitudes; and as their order had its very foundations laid in the taste of the many, its daily bread depending upon the mites which were cast into the treasury, and the amount of such contributions (individually so small) result-

ing altogether from their number, no pains were spared to minister to the vulgar appetite, on every occasion, such viands as were most palatable; and the subtleties of the school doctors and their operose learning gave way before the language, allusions, and illustrations of common life; and the homely story and the broad joke mingled themselves with subjects the most sacred. But whatever the cause might be, the style of the Roman Catholic preacher was extremely familiar; and this fashion, we have seen, had not entirely worn itself out in the first century after the Reformation.

But to return to the thread of our narrative. Out of the examinations and convictions that took place under the Six Articles one good at least issued—that Cranmer appears to have been hereby led to re-consider his opinion on transubstantiation. Hitherto it had been strictly conformable to the doctrine of the church of Rome: he now saw many intelligent men, powerful in the Scriptures, brought up as offenders against this cardinal dogma, and heard them vindicate their heterodoxy in a manner to make an impression upon a candid mind like his own; so that by the end of the reign of Henry, his belief on this article had undergone a change, and one of his earliest acts under Edward was to avow and proceed upon it.

It has been said, that from the date of the dissolution of the religious houses, the Reformation laboured in its progress. Even Henry seems to have been appalled at the violent reaction which followed, and to have held his hand. But those wise and good men whose object it had

been all along to save what they could of the wreck, out of which to construct another ark, were still on the watch to promote the great cause in which they were embarked, both by permanent institutions and present instruction. Accordingly, whoever might be the advisers of the measure, out of the spoils of the monasteries six new bishoprics were now founded,—those of Westminster (since suppressed), Chester, Gloucester, Peterborough, Oxford, and Bristol, together with deaneries and prebends respectively annexed, all slenderly endowed, and upon the whole a sad falling off from the splendid expectations which the king had originally held forth of eighteen new sees, together with a proportional number of suffragans,—expectations which the act of suppression had encouraged, and by which many were reconciled to the confiscation of the church property, as hoping that it was only to be fused and cast into a better mould. Its authors, however, “liked not that paying again; it was a double trouble.” Accordingly they compounded with the creditor, and the dividend (with the addition of funds for the endowment of some of the metropolitan hospitals, a few professorships in either university, and a college in Cambridge,) was what we have seen. The cathedrals were better than the monasteries; having been hitherto in the hands of the regulars, they were now put upon the same footing as the new institutions of the like kind, and their revenues appropriated to the maintenance of secular dignitaries. Here, however, the plan proposed by Cranmer, owing probably to the opposition of the Roman Catholic party, was not adopted. In the settling down of

the establishment once more, it was his wish that the cathedrals should be converted into theological colleges; that readers of divinity, of Hebrew, and of Greek should be attached to them; that a body of students should be maintained in them, out of whom the bishops might always find clerical recruits duly qualified for the pastoral office; that here, in short, should be realised a second time the institution which Samuel (the great reformer of his own church) established throughout all the land of Israel, "schools of the prophets;" and that thus might be filled up most effectually the gap which had been occasioned in the system of public instruction by the extinction of the religious orders. What might have been the effect of such a measure, which would have completed the Reformation in an important particular where it was left greatly defective, it may now be vain to conjecture. Whether such establishments might not have contributed to stave off the crisis which was at hand from the puritans,—a party then beginning to take a shape, and which owed its rapid development to the ineffectual opposition presented to it by a feeble and ignorant clergy;—whether much schism and separation of a more recent date might not have been escaped, by the aspect which these conspicuous pillars of orthodoxy would have presented in different districts, and to which public opinion might have looked, as to light-houses, for a guidance;—whether, fertile as our church has been in great divines, the harvest might not have proved still more abundant when a regular theological education, comprising a sound knowledge of Hebrew, of the Fathers, of

whatever else might conduce to the formation of the instructed scribe, fell systematically to the lot of all who were intended for the ministry;—whether a cheap education like this would not have afforded opportunities for youths of promise amongst the poorer classes to emerge from obscurity, and to enter a profession for which nature had fitted them, but accident had shut to the door;—whether the church would not have been a gainer by the additional talent which would thus have been called forth in her service, when the “yeoman’s sons,” by whom, according to Latimer, “the faith in Christ had been hitherto maintained chiefly,” and “the husbandman’s children,” who are often endowed (as Cranmer strenuously argues upon this very subject) with singular gifts, would have sent in their contribution to the public stock;—and whether that same cause of attachment which bound the common people to the friars, and through them to the church itself, namely, the feeling that they had a personal interest and relationship in many of its ministers, would not have been hereby more effectually perpetuated:—or, on the other hand, whether such institutions might not have withdrawn the clergy too much from all secular intercourse, and prevented those connections of private friendship or private tuition from being formed, to which our schools and universities give occasion;—whether the alliance between church and state is not principally continued by such interlacements, and would not be greatly weakened by their disruption;—whether, again, the provision which our cathedrals (on their present footing) offer to the younger sons of powerful families (as

the monasteries (once did) does not pledge those families more deeply to the maintenance of the establishment;—whether the rewards, again, which they enable the church occasionally to confer on those who have done her good service as men of letters may not contribute to create a learned clergy, by furnishing the means of learned leisure, — is altogether a problem which it is much more easy to state than to solve.

Nor had the Reformers only to watch their opportunity for the foundation of permanent institutions by which religion might be then and for ever promoted; but whenever a favourable moment was afforded for putting forth sound instruction to the people, they had to seize upon it. During the reign of Henry this could only be done by being instant in season, the season too being generally short, and always precarious; liable to be affected by the character of a marriage, and the duration of it; by a continental treaty; by a vote in parliament satisfactory or the contrary; in short, by the humour of a prince at once in the highest degree capricious and resolute. Something, however, was done; and we shall now gather up a few dropped stitches which we have intentionally passed in this chapter, in order that our subject might meet with no interruption.

The vulgar work of destruction did not prevail, even under Henry, to the total exclusion of every other. In 1536, certain articles were set forth by the convocation, and with the king's authority, which had for their title, "Articles devised by the King's Highnes' Majestie to stablysh the Christen quietnes," &c., much diversity of opinion

having sprung up in the country, as the preamble informs us, both upon the essentials and ceremonials of which they treat. They are ten in number, and rather indicate that a reformation was abroad, than that it was achieved. They allow the use of images, but endeavour to guard against their abuse; sanction prayers to the saints, but with a caution against superstition; defend the doctrine of purgatory, though with some hesitation, and with a positive rejection of pope's pardons and masses of *scala cæli*; assert the sacraments of penance, baptism, and the Lord's Supper; maintaining, with regard to the two latter, that infants dying before baptism perish everlastingly, and that the real body and blood of our Lord is present in the elements; but justification on the ground of merit they disclaim altogether, giving to Christ, and to Him only, the praise; and the faith of a Christian they consider to be comprehended in the canonical Scriptures and the three creeds alone. It may be well to observe, inasmuch as the observation throws some light upon the spirit in which the formularies of our church were conceived, even at this remote period of the Reformation, that Melancthon is with reason believed to have had a voice in the Articles of 1536. So early as 1534 he was pressed to come to England and assist in completing the regeneration of the church; and invitations to the like effect continued to be forwarded to him. In 1535 we find him suggesting, by letter to Henry, the necessity of issuing a simple form of doctrine, such as might be agreed upon by learned men; and at the same time adding, that Dr. Barnes, whom he

calls Antonius (afterwards the martyr, but then Henry's ambassador in Germany), had been "very carefully discussing with him *certain articles*, to whom he had given his opinion upon them in writing." Certain it is, that in the very next year these of King Henry came out, and that the definition of justification contained in one of them is a translation from the "*Loci Theologici*" of this Lutheran reformer.¹

Nor was this all: the measure which was dealt out to the degenerate Jews by Antiochus and his servants had, in a lower degree, long obtained amongst the ecclesiastical powers in England. "When they had rent in pieces the book of the law which they found, they burnt them with fire; and wheresoever was found with any the book of the testament the command was, that they should put him to death. Thus did they by their authority unto the Israelites every month, to as many as they found in their cities."² But in the year 1537, the whole Bible translated into English by Tindall, Rogers, and perhaps by Coverdale³ (the staple of all future editions), bearing, however, at first the title of Matthew's Bible, the better to recommend it, Tindall having recently died in the full odour of heresy, was published in England; and by the influence of Cranmer and Cromwell, the king's license was procured that it should be freely bought and sold, and his command issued that a

¹ See Archbishop Laurence's Bampton Lectures, Notes, pp. 196—199.

² 1 Macc. i. 56. 58. Fox, i. 682. 685. 772. ii. 416. Collier, ii. 188.

³ See Strype's Cranmer, p. 59., and Fox's Acts and Mon. ii. 564.

copy of it should be set up in every church. This was a day of rejoicing to the Archbishop, greater, says he, "than had there been given him a thousand pounds."¹ Nor to him only; the people, long thirsty for the word, now rushed to the waters of life, and drank freely: whosoever had the means bought the volume; where the cost was too great for an individual, neighbours and fellow-apprentices would unite purses and buy in common; a man would be seen at the lower end of his church on a Sunday reading it aloud, whilst numbers flocked about him to listen and learn; and the one great topic of the time made its way even into taverns and alehouses, where it seems to have been often the subject of vehement and angry debate.²

The same year was distinguished by another work, calculated to advance the Reformation a step farther. "The Institution of a Christian Man," or the *Bishops' Book*, as it was called in popular language, from the quality of those who were chiefly concerned in composing it. It consists of an exposition of the Apostles' Creed, the Seven Sacraments, the Ten Commandments, the Pater-noster, the Ave Maria; to which are annexed the two articles on Justification and Purgatory (as they were published in 1536), the others having been inserted in the body of the work under their respective heads. The mere index of contents is enough to show that much still remained for the reformers to do; still much was herein done. The corruption of man was strongly asserted, his faculties as well as his

¹ Strype, p. 58.

² Strype's *Cranmer*, p. 64. and Appendix, 42

appetites, his reason no less than his will¹, contrary to the doctrine of the schools, which had limited its effects to the latter and lower half of our nature²; the virtues of a redemption were consequently vindicated, and were placed in a position from which the dogma of merit had depressed them. The superstitious attention to trifles of ceremonial, whilst the great moral duties were disregarded, was rebuked—the dread, for instance, of eating an egg on Friday, as contrasted with the indifference felt for a breach of the most fundamental laws of charity.³ The dishonest substitution, in sermons, of fables and inventions of men, for the Scriptures, was reprobated, together with all wilful misrepresentation of the doctrines contained in the same.⁴ On the whole, this was the culminating point of the Reformation, during the reign of Henry: henceforward, that is, from the year 1538, with few intermissions, it ostensibly, though perhaps not in reality, declined.⁵

In 1543 another work appeared, under the sanction of the king and the convocation⁶: it had

¹ *Formularies of Faith in the Reign of Henry VIII.* Published at the Clarendon Press, 1825. P. 25. 34. 186.

² Archbishop Laurence's *Bampton Lectures*, p. 61—64.

³ *Formularies*, &c. p. 116.

⁴ *Id.* p. 168.

⁵ Cranmer's correspondence with Cromwell, on the subject of the Lutheran envoys, who were preparing to depart, evidently from a feeling that the purposes for which they were invited into England were all thwarted by the party which had now the ascendancy at court, shows the struggle which was going on at this crisis, and how it was likely to end. See Burnet, iii. Rec. 48., and Todd's *Cranmer*, i. 250.

⁶ Archbishop Laurence, p. 200. Burnet (*Hist. Reform.* i. 286. and Supplement, 159.) asserts that it was

for its title, "A Necessary Doctrine and Erudition for any Christian Man," and was vulgarly called "the *King's Book*."¹ It was, in fact, the *Bishops' Book* revised, with some additional matter touching free will, good works, justification, predestination, purgatory,— subjects which now began to be discussed with great warmth and difference of opinion. On comparing it with its prototype, it will be seen how far from progression the Reformation had been during the interval. It came out, indeed, whilst the act of the Six Articles was in force, and Gardiner in power. The wonder, therefore, is, rather that it says so much, than that it does not say more. The truth, however, seems to be, that it was an act of compromise; a boon granted to the reformers (rendered equivocal, indeed, by an infusion into it of the spirit of the Bishop of Winchester)², in consideration of the sacrifice that was about to be required of them; for the Bible in the vulgar tongue was now to be once more withdrawn. To those "whose office it was to teach other, the having, reading, and studying of Holy Scripture (it seems) was not only convenient, but also necessary; but for the other part of the church ordained to be taught, it ought to be deemed, certainly, that the reading of the Old and New Testament was not so

never introduced into convocation; but here, as in so many other places, he is mistaken.

¹ The name was indeed given it by Gardiner; who thus, under the mask of a compliment, pledged the king to a work much less favourable to the Reformation than the *Bishops' Book*. See Strype's *Cranmer*, Appendix, No. xxxv.

² Strype's *Cranmer*, p. 100.

necessary for all those folks." For them it was enough to hear; and that nothing might be wanting to convince, Scripture itself was quoted in support of this sentiment;—"Blessed are they that *hear* the word of God, and keep it;" where it is insinuated, for it would have been too bad to affirm it, that the blessing attaches to those who *hear*, not to those who *read*.¹ But if we meet with a stumbling-block on the threshold of this new publication,—for the passages alluded to are in the preface,—on further acquaintance with it we shall find our suspicions, that Gardiner's hand had been busy in it, strengthened. The depravity of our nature, so stoutly insisted upon in the Bishops' Book, is nearly overlooked in the parallel passage of the King's Book², and the good offices of our Lord for the recovery of man are set forth in a much less lively manner in the latter than in the former place; where the one has enlarged upon the sufferings of Christ chiefly as propitiatory, the other, though not disclaiming this consideration, rather descants upon them as exemplary³; whilst the one declares the condemnation of every man to be sufficiently established, even though he were to be tried by the tenth commandment alone, the other evades the humiliating confession⁴; when the one denies even martyrdom to be a *meritorious* cause of salvation, and ascribes it altogether to the grace of God through Christ, the

¹ See Preface to the "Doctrine and Erudition," &c. p. 218, 219.

² Formularies, &c. comp. p. 34. and 230.

³ Comp. p. 40. 42. with 234, 235.

⁴ Id. p. 172. and 333.

Other gives a different turn to the commentary, and escapes the avowal¹: in the one, the sacrament of matrimony is explained as that which God commands to some, leaves free to all; in the other, a clause is inserted, excepting from its provisions priests and others under vows of celibacy²: in the one, the exposition of the second commandment begins thus;—"By these words we are utterly forbidden to make or to have any similitude or image, to the intent to bow down to it, or to worship it;" in the other,—"By these words we be *not* forbidden to make or to have similitudes or images, but only we be forbidden to make or to have them to the intent to do godly honour unto them, as it appeareth in the xxvith chapter of Leviticus."³ It is true that the ulterior interpretation of the commandment in the two cases does not differ so materially as might be expected from the respective introductions; still the introductions are sufficient to show that the spirit in which the commentaries were made was not, in both instances, quite the same. Other examples of a similar declension in the principles of the Reformation might be gathered from a close comparison of these documents; at the same time, it would afford some minute indications that a better knowledge of the Scriptures had been meanwhile diffusing itself over the country, and that the six years' privilege of consulting them had not been altogether lost. Thus, it may be remarked, that in the Bishops' Book we read of "*one Pontius*

¹ Comp. p. 60. and 252.

² Id. p. 82. *et seq.* and p. 298.

³ Id. p. 134. and 299.

Pilate being the chief judge in Jerusalem¹;" whereas in the King's Book the same individual is called "Pontius Pilate," &c.², as though he were a character with which the people were more familiar: again, in the former, the legend of binding "Christ fast to a pillar," and so crowning and scourging him, is inserted in the details of his passion³; in the latter, this incident is omitted, and the scriptural account is strictly followed.⁴ It is singular, too, that, in the one, the escape of "Lot and his *three* daughters" is spoken of; a mistake which the other corrects, his "*two* daughters" being here the reading.⁵

In addition to the scanty means of instruction in a better faith which were thus extorted from the king in his last years like drops of blood, he was prevailed upon by Cranmer to issue orders for the destruction of some favourite images, of which the superstitious abuse was the most notorious⁶ — those of our Lady of Walsingham, our Lady of Ipswich, St. Thomas of Canterbury, and St. Ann of Buxton, being the chief⁷; to sanction the introduction into the churches of certain prayers or suffrages, — the litany which we still use, except that some objectionable clauses have been since omitted, being of the number⁸; and to permit, moreover, the use of occasional prayers, for the supply of temporary wants, or the removal of temporary calamities, — for rain or for fair wea-

¹ Formularies, p. 38.

² Id. p. 233.

³ Id. p. 39.

⁴ Id. p. 238.

⁵ Comp. pp. 162. 325.

⁶ Strype's Cranmer, pp. 136. 128.

⁷ See Cranmer's Catechism, p. 23.

⁸ See Mr. Todd's Life of Cranmer, i. 354.

ther,—that¹ thus the hearts of the congregation might be enlisted in their devotions, and the lukewarmness be counteracted, which was fast alienating them from public worship, conducted, as it was, in a language of which they were ignorant, though with errors of which they were aware.

Meanwhile, the same vigilant prelate supplied, as far as he had the opportunity, the livings in his gift with men devoted to the cause which he had at heart, and encouraged the more frequent delivery of sermons ; whereby, though much violent collision of doctrine was produced amongst the preachers, still sparks of truth were elicited, and light, though not without heat, was dispersed.¹

Thus stood the Reformation, when Henry, who had now done all the work which such an instrument was fit for, died, pressing in his last moments the hand of Cranmer, to whom, and to whom only, through evil report and through good report, he had ever been faithful and true. To him he bequeathed a church which was little but a ruinous heap ; its revenues dissipated, its ministers divided, its doctrines unsettled, its laws obsolete, impracticable, and unadapted to the great change it had sustained.

It remains for us to trace the re-construction of these shattered materials,—to watch the wise master-builders as they pursued their difficult task to its accomplishment ; and beholding the pains, the perseverance, the study, the time which it cost them, to distrust the wild suggestions of an age of crude experiment and super-

¹ Strype, p. 137.

ficial knowledge, — an age which would rush in, without knowing why, upon forms and institutions which the sagest heads have grown grey in devising and perfecting; and rather listen, as far as regards our church, to the advice of the ancient, unpretending though it be — “*Spartam nactus es, hanc exorna.*”

CHAPTER X.

EDWARD VI. — ADVANCE OF THE REFORMATION. — ERASMUS'S PARAPHRASE. — HOMILIES. — CRANMER'S CATECHISM. — OFFICE OF COMMUNION. — BOOK OF COMMON-PRAYER. — TIME OF SERVICE, AND LENGTH. — PRIMER. — ARTICLES OF 1553. — MODERATION OF THE ENGLISH REFORMERS

THE accession of Edward, the Josiah of his country, as he was commonly called in his own day, reanimated the Reformation ; and during his short reign it was that the church of England was constructed, in the main, such as we now see it. The young prince, who was brought up a protestant, was himself eminently calculated to recommend the cause. His own character, both mental and moral, was a most persuasive advocate of the system which had nurtured it. Cardan, who was called into England to prescribe for the Archbishop of St. Andrew's, then sick of a dropsy, and was introduced to the king, now in his fifteenth year, relates the particulars of a short conversation which he had with him on the subject of comets, which won the heart of the philosopher, and, like a journal which has come down to us written in his own hand¹, certainly argues in him a wit beyond his age. Latin he spoke, says Cardan, who seems to have conversed with him in it, as readily as himself; and in many other languages he is said to have been a pro-

¹ Burnet's Reform. ii. Append. 3.

ficient, stimulated, perhaps, by an apophthegm of Roger Ascham, his sister's schoolmaster, though not his own, "that as a bird cannot soar unto heaven with one wing, so cannot a man attain unto excellence with one tongue." Indeed, to a study of tongues, we are told by a correspondent of his own, he had more applied than to any matter either of history or of policy, the holy Scriptures excepted; nevertheless, the pains which were taken to render him in all things an accomplished prince may be seen in the questions (eighty-four in number) submitted to him by the clerk of the council, probably at the desire of the Protector Somerset; and which were intended as food for his private speculations and debates with his friends. They are such as embrace nearly all those principles of government upon which he would be afterwards called to act—"Whether is better for the commonwealth that the power be in the nobility or the people?" "How easily a weak prince with good order may long be maintained; and how soon a mighty prince with little disorder may be destroyed?" "What causeth an inheritor king to lose his realm?" "Whether religion, besides the honour of God, be not also the greatest stay of civil order?" "How dangerous it is to be the author of a new matter?"¹—with many other problems, well worth the attention of those to whom the education of a sovereign is confided. His heart was as good as his head; and as it is with the latter that we believe, but with the former that we believe unto righteousness, so did its natural dictates

¹ Ellis's Original Letters, ii. 197. 2d Series.

rise in arms against those more subtle principles according to which Cranmer had conscientiously persuaded himself, and endeavoured to persuade the king, that the death of Joan of Kent was a duty; and happy would it have been for the memory of that otherwise almost unspotted character, had he submitted his more mature but more sophisticated judgment to the righteous tears of this gifted boy. What he did, however, he did ignorantly; not in any carnal zeal, but after long debate, and, as he writes, in bitterness and sorrow of spirit.¹ He did it in the temper in which Sir Matthew Hale condemned the witches of Leostoff, and suffered judgment to be executed upon them; though he represents himself most unaffectedly, and most truly, as having in general such tenderness in cases of life as almost disqualified him for the bench; and though Sir Thomas Brown, who actually wrote against vulgar errors, was in court at the time, and influenced by his voice the verdict of the jury.² But in this case, Cranmer seems to have thought that the honour of Christ himself, which was blasphemed, required an example to be made; and, weak and wicked as it is now allowed to be to condemn to the flames for matters of speculative opinion, which do not directly interfere with the morals of society, and therefore do not demand the interposition of the secular magistrate, it was the dogma of the church in which Cranmer had been born and bred; from which even yet he had not wholly emancipated himself; but

¹ "Cum animi amaritudine et cordis dolore." Burnet, *Reform.* ii. 168.

² Parr's Works, iv. 181.

to which Edward, happily for himself and his country, had never been enslaved. The case of Van Paris the Dutchman is usually coupled with this of Joan Bocher; but there is no sufficient proof that Cranmer was here a party actively engaged, or that any blame is due to him, unless it be that he did not intercede for his life. It is singular, and characteristic of the force of early prejudice, that, in the touching confession which Cranmer made before he went to the stake, no allusion is found to the case of this poor fanatic.

Such was the child to whose hand Providence committed the sceptre of England for a short season, "*Ostendunt terris hunc tantum fata;*" and accordingly the church had rest in those days. The Roman Catholic party, which had so effectually clogged the wheels of the Reformation in the latter years of Henry, did not resign their power without a struggle under Edward. From amongst the guardians of the king, who were also to be the governors of the kingdom during the minority, the Earl of Hertford, afterwards Duke of Somerset, the king's maternal uncle, and a friend of the Reformation, was chosen head of the regency, under the title of Protector; whilst Wriothesley, the lord chancellor, a Catholic, and the leader of his sect, who opposed the elevation of Somerset, hoping that, if all the members were equal in authority, the substantial power would be his own, was deposed from his office, and deprived of the seals. Cranmer was in his own right, as primate, a member of this commission; and finding a cordial coadjutor in the Protector, he now felt himself released from the vexatious restrictions which had hitherto cramped him, and

began for the first time to breathe freely. Now, therefore, his plans for restoring the national church rapidly develope themselves, and to the consideration of these our attention must for the present be directed.

It would be easy to take a more extensive sweep of contemporary history, as others have done, and to adorn our narrative with the spoils, — for the stirring times here treated of, supply abundant materials for such a purpose; but it is better, perhaps, to follow our subject closely up, putting aside many collateral incidents, not, indeed, as without their influence on the Reformation, but as holding a very subordinate place in it; and thus to keep our eye single, neither distracting it by too much diversity, nor perplexing it by too much detail. For, in general, the most profitable method of treating a complicated subject, perhaps, is, not to open up every particular, great and small, which may bear upon it in its degree; but rather to filter the rush of matter which presents itself, and, striving to make a small book, which is a hard thing, instead of a large one, which is most easy, to place the reader in possession of such events only as served to stamp the times to which they belonged, or serve now to characterise them, and then to leave him to his own reflection or to his own study to fill up the picture.

The first of those successive publications, by the circulation of which Cranmer built up the faith of his country, was *Erasmus's Paraphrase of the New Testament*, translated into English, a copy of which, as well as of the Bible, was to be set up in every parish church; the next, a volume

of *Homilies*, twelve in number. The paraphrase Cranmer himself did not maintain to be perfect; but it was the best upon which he could lay his hand; moreover, as executed by a member of the church of Rome, (from whose eyes, however, the scales were fast falling,) it was calculated, he might think (and an expression which drops from him confirms this¹), for a church in a state of transition like our own. Gardiner offered many captious objections to it; others, which might have been urged with more show of reason, he was not, perhaps, the man to discover or propound. Had he compared it with similar writings of some other of the reformers, he would have found that, in making such a choice, Cranmer, so far from intending to irritate, could only be led by a desire to conciliate the Catholics as much as might be without a compromise. Had he compared, for instance, Erasmus's paraphrase of the Galatians with the commentary of Luther on the same epistle — had he contrasted the caution of the one interpreter with the intrepidity, not to say hardihood, of the other; the different degrees of animation with which the great evangelical doctrines, and those the most obnoxious to the Roman catholics, are respectively handled by them; the different degrees of keenness they discover in the detection of those doctrines under the same texts; the more or less reserved sense in which the works of the law are understood as affecting justification; not to speak of the direct fulminations against the church of Rome, which Luther takes

¹ Burnet, ii. 37.

every occasion to launch, and Erasmus to withhold;—if he had thus done, probably Luther's most powerful treatise would not, indeed, have made him a convert to his opinions; Cranmer himself most likely would have disavowed, or at least tempered, several of them; but it would have at any rate satisfied him that the archbishop had far more offensive weapons in his armoury than those which he thought proper on this occasion to produce.

The objections which Gardiner directed against the *Homilies* were many of them just enough in logic, though feeble in themselves; for it was alleged, that the doctrines of the *Homilies* and of the *King's Book* did not always agree; nor did they: but this only served to show (what was the truth) that, when the latter was published, Cranmer was counteracted by other influence; or else (what was equally the truth) that his own opinions had in the interval undergone considerable revision. Justification by faith only, a doctrine which in the *King's Book* had been greatly qualified, is made a leading principle in the *Homilies*; and certain superstitions of the church of Rome, which in the former were tolerated, if not encouraged, in the latter were absolutely forbidden.¹ It may be noticed, in passing, that on some points, as on that of human corruption for instance, a tone of greater moderation prevails in this book of the *Homilies* than in the other, which appeared in 1562, prepared by

¹ Compare Hom. on Good Works, part iii. with the exposition of the second commandment in the "Erudition," p. 299.

Queen Elizabeth's bishops, principally, it has been said, by Jewel.¹ Such a volume had been promised in an advertisement affixed to the former one; and many of the subjects actually treated in it are there enumerated, though not all: but the composition, it should seem, was reserved for those who completed the Reformation. In neither case, however, can the several Homilies be assigned to their several authors with any certainty. At the same time, in the first volume (for with regard to the second no single Homily of them all has been appropriated), there is reason to think that the one on "salvation" is Cranmer's own, as perhaps those on "faith" and "good works²;" and internal evidence arising out of certain homely expressions, and peculiar forms of ejaculation, the like to which occur in Latimer's sermons, pretty clearly betrays the hand of the Bishop of Worcester to have been engaged in the homily against "brawling and contention;" the one against "adultery" may be safely given to Thomas Becon, one of Cranmer's chaplains, in whose works, published in 1564, it is still to be found; of the rest nothing is known but by the merest conjecture.³ On the whole, the key to the right understanding of either volume is not the Calvinistic controversy,—for amongst all the Homilies, as Bishop Burnet observes, there are none relating to the divine

¹ Burnet on the Articles, Pref. p. iii.

² Strype's Cranmer, p. 149.

³ Eccles. Biog. iii. 505 note, and Todd's Cranmer, ii. 10., where the authority of John Woolton, a nephew of Dean Nowell, who published in 1576, is quoted for ascribing the three homilies above mentioned to Cranmer.

decrees¹,—but the horror of papal abuses, which drove the compilers into some hearty expressions in contradiction to them, particularly in those for the Nativity and Whitsunday, — expressions which would rather have recommended themselves to the honest extravagance of a Latimer than to the caution of a Cranmer, and which have accordingly given occasion to many doubtful disputations both in metaphysics and theology. Still, the *Homilies* must have been most wholesome lessons for those times, when minor differences were merged in the broad distinction between Romanists and men of the new learning, and in the one great struggle for the liberties temporal and spiritual of the church of England.

Soon after this, in the year 1548, was published *Cranmer's Catechism*, as it was called, it being said in the titlepage to be “set forth” by him; a circumstance which led Burnet into the mistake, subsequently corrected at the suggestion of Strype, that it was composed by the archbishop. The truth is, that it was originally written in German, and was probably one of the many catechisms to which Luther's own gave rise, and by which the Reformation in Germany was forwarded. It was translated into Latin by Justus Jonas, the father most likely (for there were two), the intimate friend of Luther; and might have been brought into England by the son, a less conspicuous character among the Reformers, who came to this country in 1548, driven from his home, like many more, by the religious

ordinance of Charles V. known by the name of the *Interim*. From the Latin it was turned into English, faithfully for the most part, by some hand of Cranmer's own choosing, perhaps by Rowland Taylor the martyr, of glorious memory, then one of his chaplains. It is drawn up on the same plan as the Bishops' Book and the King's Book, which had preceded it; being an exposition of the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Sacraments. As Cranmer prefixed to the work his own name, it must be considered to express his own opinions at the time; and its history is here traced with the more care, because it presents another picture of the progressive workings of his mind towards the point at which he finally reposed, and another proof of the slow and painful process through which he arrived at what he conceived to be the truth. Accordingly, in his Catechism we still find the Commandments arranged after the Roman Catholic usage, the second omitted, or consolidated with the first, and the tenth divided into two. We find three sacraments still insisted upon, though four others had been withdrawn, — baptism, the bath of regeneration, or instrument of the second birth¹; absolution, or the authority of the keys, by virtue of which pardon is obtained for sins after baptism; and the holy communion, which administers fresh supplies of grace to the worthy receiver, and enables him to go on from strength to strength. Of the first of these three sacraments it may be remarked, too, that the language is more dogmatical than would have been used by

¹ Cranmer's Catechism, pp. 182. 206. Oxford, 1829.

Cranmer a few years later; "those who have heathen parents, and die without baptism," being said to be "damned everlastingly¹;"—a phrase, it is true, merely rendered from the Latin; but the translation exercises on some other occasions a discretionary power of abridging; and whilst the former rejects the church of Rome as a church, counting it to be such only in name, and classing it even with the Turks², the latter tempers its zeal with a sounder judgment, and omits altogether so suicidal a statement: the time came when Cranmer would have left these infants to the uncovenanted mercies of God, saying within himself, "What is that to thee? Follow thou me." Still, this is characteristic of the several stages of opinion through which he had to pass. A similar remark applies to the doctrine of the holy communion, as here explained. It is clearly that of the real presence; for though a distinction has been taken between some expressions in the Latin catechism (which certainly inculcates the Lutheran tenet), and the corresponding phrases in the English translation, as though the former asserted the body and blood of Christ to be *present* in the sacrament, the latter to be *received* therein; still there are many places where such a distinction does not obtain, and where the argument itself does not seem to admit of it.³ But, after all, why has it been made a matter of reproach against Cranmer, that he was first a Catholic, then a Lutheran, and lastly a Zwinglian in his notions on the Communion; successively a believer in transubstan-

¹ Cranmer's Catechism, p. 51.

² Id. p. 106.

³ Id. see pp. 208. 210. 219.

tiation, in the real, and in the spiritual presence of the body and blood of Christ? This he was : for the first opinion he maintained when he argued against Lambert¹; the second, when he published this Catechism; the last, when he wrote his book upon the sacrament. Gardiner might take advantage of such changes, as in fact he did, and have his sneer; but nothing could be more natural than that a sincere man, only intent on following out truth, lead where it might, should have arrived at it by degrees, and by precisely such degrees as these — that he should see men as trees walking, before he saw them as men; and nothing can argue more strongly the sound and sober principles upon which the Reformation proceeded, than this its gradual advance. It was not, we find, without patient investigation, and the successive abandonment of every false position, as it proved itself to be such, that it ultimately attained the strong ground from which it has never since been dislodged.

This catechism (it may be remarked) has been sometimes confounded with the short form contained in our Prayer Book. The latter, however, was of genuine English growth, though of doubtful origin: Strype assigns it expressly to Nowell²; but the modern biographer of the Dean of St. Paul's questions his title to it, and rather gives it to Poinet, afterwards Bishop of Winchester.³ In any case, Cranmer appears to have reviewed and digested it, not without the able co-operation of Ridley.⁴ It made a part of

¹ Fox, ii. 425.

² Eccles. Mem. ii. 868.

³ Churton's Life of Dean Nowell, pp. 403. 407.

⁴ Todd's Life of Cranmer, ii. 61.

the Liturgy of King Edward, of which more will be said in its proper place, being inserted in the Office for Confirmation. Nor has any material change been since introduced into it, except that the explanation of the Sacraments was added in the reign of James I., the original Catechism having ended with the Exposition of the Lord's Prayer.

The same year, 1548, came out another work, by which the cause of the Reformation was still more essentially served, and the structure of the church advanced, the *Office of the Communion*. It was compiled chiefly out of the Roman missal, of which it is often a literal translation, by "sundry of his Majesty's most grave and well-learned prelates and other learned men in the Scriptures," and in its first shape retained (so it was afterwards thought) some particulars of its original, which would have been better modified or suppressed. It underwent, like the other Offices of which more will be said presently, a rigid revision by Martyr and Bucer before its re-appearance in 1552, for the benefit of whose remarks the whole was turned into Latin (so pains-taking were the founders of our church); and prayer for the dead, the invocation of the Holy Ghost upon the elements, and a certain bias, or what might have been mistaken for such, towards the real presence, were corrected, but with a delicate hand and admirable judgment. Though there were still in after-times those amongst the non-jurors who maintained that the changes were not to its advantage; and even Laud, it has been observed, in the composition of his Liturgy for the episcopalian church of Scot-

land, has in some things shown a preference to the first over the amended form.¹

Here again have we to remark and admire the moderation of the Reformers: they did not unmannerly reject those Offices of the Church which, however corrupted, lost themselves in a fathomless abyss of years, and might even have partaken of something of the spirit of an apostolic age; for though the Clementine liturgy, to which the Missal, like many other liturgies of various countries and dates, owes many of its elements, is found in a work, not indeed of the antiquity to which its title pretends, the Apostolical Constitutions; still it is a work of very great antiquity, perhaps antecedent to the Council of Nice; and therefore it is not visionary to suppose that this primitive Office contained in it breathes the language of very early times indeed, and that some of the prayers which for three centuries of persecution might have lived rather by tradition than in writing, may be here more or less faithfully preserved. These helps, which our Reformers did not disdain, they showed themselves able to improve, correcting what was objectionable in doctrine, removing what was offensive in taste, and often communicating by some happy expression even an additional glow of devotion to passages in themselves (it might have been thought) too beautiful to touch; for in the whole compass of English literature, many as are the excellent versions of ancient writings which it can boast, it would be

¹ On this subject see "A Collection of the Principal Liturgies," by Dr. Thomas Brett, with a Dissertation on the same, p. 357.

in vain to look for any specimens of translation (merely to put the case thus) so vigorous, so simple, so close, and yet so free from all constraint, as are afforded by the Offices of our Church. An example taken at random may suffice to acquit us of all charge of declamation. It shall be one of the Prefaces; that for Easter. Thus it runs in the Missal:—

Verè dignum et justum est, æquum et salutare, Te quidem, Domine, omni tempore, sed in hoc potissimum gloriosius prædicare, cum Pascha nostrum immolatus est Christus. Ipse enim verus est Agnus, qui abstulit peccata mundi; qui mortem nostram moriendo destruxit, et vitam resurgendo reparavit. Et ideo cum Angelis et Archangelis, cum Thronis et Dominationibus, cumque omni militiâ cœlestis exercitus, hymnum gloriæ tuæ canimus, sine fine dicentes, Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus, Dominus Deus Sabaoth. Pleni sunt cœli et terra gloriâ tuâ, Hosanna in Excelsis. Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini, Hosanna in Excelsis."

Let any man attempt to express this sublime appeal to God in his mother-tongue for himself, and then he will know how to appreciate the ease with which it is effected by those gifted men, to the worth of whose labours our own generation is not, perhaps, sufficiently alive, in the following manner:—

"It is very meet, right, and our bounden duty, that we should, at all times and in all places, give thanks unto thee, O Lord, Holy Father, Almighty Everlasting God. But chiefly are we bound to praise thee for the glorious resurrection of thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord; for he is the

very Paschal Lamb which was offered for us, and hath taken away the sin of the world; who by his death hath destroyed death, and by his rising to life again hath restored to us everlasting life. Therefore with angels and archangels, and with all the company of heaven, we laud and magnify thy glorious name, evermore praising thee, and saying, Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Hosts; heaven and earth are full of thy glory: glory be to thee, O Lord, most High."

Nothing can go beyond this, unless it be some of our Collects, very many of which are almost literal versions of those of the Missal; and were more wanted for occasional purposes; and possibly some might be added to our Liturgy with advantage; more might be found in this same exhaustless mine. Here, again, let us to the testimony. The collect for Palm Sunday is this:—

"*Omnipotens, sempiternus Deus, qui humano generi ad imitandum humilitatis exemplum, Salvatorem nostrum carnem sumere et crucem subire fecisti: concede propitius, ut et patientiæ ipsius habere documenta, et resurrectionis consortia mereamur per eundem Dominum.*" How free, yet how faithful, is the copy:—

"Almighty, everlasting God, who of thy tender love towards mankind, hast sent thy Son our Saviour Jesus Christ to take upon him our flesh, and to suffer death upon the cross, that all mankind might follow the example of his great humility: mercifully grant that we may both follow the example of his patience and also be made partakers of his resurrection, through the same Jesus Christ our Lord."

The Office of the Communion, though soon combined with the other Offices, appears at first to have been published by itself, and before any other service¹; it being important to provide a substitute for the Mass with as little delay as possible. At the end of the same year, however, (1548) the Book of Common Prayer was prepared, and submitted to parliament; and in 1549 it was put forth by authority, and was appointed to supersede every other form. It was drawn up by the same hands², and upon the same principles, as the Office of the Communion; and as the Missal had been laid under contribution for the latter, so was the Breviary for the former, and the ancient Liturgies for both. In that of Jerusalem, or of St. James as it is called, and of which the reader may find the substance in a popular form in the "Devotions of Bishop Andrews," many of the elements of our own beautiful Liturgy may be discovered; and the volume of matter which our earlier church prayers in general pour forth, as compared with the more

¹ Fox, ii. 659., who here gives the dates more accurately than others.

² These were Goodrich, Bishop of Ely; Ridley, of Rochester; Skyp, of Hereford; Thirlby, of Westminster; Day of Chichester; Holbeach, of Lincoln; Dr. May, Dean of St. Paul's; Dr. Taylor, Dean of Lincoln; Dr. Haynes, Dean of Exeter; Dr. Redmayn, Dean of Westminster; Dr. Cox, Almoner to the King; and Dr. Robertson, Archdeacon of Leicester. But the chief compilers, besides Cranmer, were probably Ridley and Goodrich. In the committee for drawing up the Communion Office, there were also the Archbishop of York, the Bishops of Durham, Worcester, Norwich, St. Asaph, Lichfield, Salisbury, Carlisle, Bristol, and St. David's.

jeune productions of later times, may be in a great measure imputed to the liberal use which our Reformers made of the devotions of generations gone by, and to that modesty which was content to learn from the spirits of just men now made perfect how to pray. But besides these more ancient sources, from which so much of our Prayer Book was derived, a Liturgy recently drawn up by Melancthon and Bucer, for the use of the archbishopric of Cologne, supplied many other hints. This, however, was itself no effusion of the moment, but was constructed (as might have been expected from the scholarship of its authors) out of the treasures which they found in the devotional forms of other days. Calvin had, indeed, produced a Liturgy of his own, preferring to be the author rather than the compiler, which he published at Geneva, as the form of that church, in 1545, but to this our Liturgy, as it first stood in 1549, does not bear the slightest resemblance. Whilst, however, the latter was under revision, previous to its republication in 1552, and in the hands of those foreign divines of whom mention has already been made, the substance of Calvin's work was printed in London by Valerandus Pollanus, his successor at Strasburg, then a refugee in England, with some additions of his own, and this (as was most natural) was not overlooked by men busily engaged in a similar task, and did probably suggest the introductory sentences, Exhortation, Confession, and Absolution, which were then for the first time prefixed to our Daily Prayer. Nor is it doubtful that to the appearance of this same work at that particula

moment we are indebted for the supplement to the Communion Service of the Ten Commandments, with the Responses, the latter of which, indeed, are very nearly translations from Pollanus. Still the temper of our Reformers is shown even here, and that middle way observed by them, which often constrains them to quit the guidance of these foreign theologians, and speak for themselves. Both in the Confession (and particularly that in the Communion Service) and in the Absolution, which was taken from Pollanus and not from Calvin, who did not adopt any form of the kind, extreme expressions with regard to human depravity to be met with in the originals are studiously suppressed or qualified in the imitations, as if the morbid anatomy of our nature was not the theme on which they delighted to dwell, satisfied with having at least trampled under foot all pretensions of merit on man's part, and with having vindicated the *exclusive* claim of our Lord's cross and passion to the salvation of a race fallen at any rate from a pernicious height.¹

The time of day at which the offices of the Prayer Book, thus completed, were performed, is not easily determined; and peremptorily as some have asserted that our morning service for Sundays consists of three entire services intended for three several hours of prayer, and extravagantly long, merely owing to this clumsy consolidation of them all, it would not be easy to prove that such division did ever in fact obtain. Two services probably are united; the Morning Prayer,

¹ Archbishop Laurence's Bampton Lectures, pp. 207. 269.

strictly so called, being one; the Litany and Communion the other;—but that the two latter again were ever separated seems very doubtful, or, indeed, that the first continued for any great while after the Reformation to be severed from the rest. That such was the case originally there are many reasons for believing. It naturally succeeded to the *matins* of the Roman Catholic church, as the Litany and Communion did to the *High Mass*¹; and it would, therefore, be very likely that the hours in either case would also correspond. Moreover, in all the early Common Prayer Books, even in the very first, there is a Rubric, which directs such as intend to partake of the Communion “to signify their names to the curate over night, or else in the morning before the beginning of Morning Prayer, *or immediately after*”²; a phrase which argues some interval between the two services, such as might suffice for considering the qualifications of the candidates, and for providing elements proportioned to the numbers who would attend. Neither is there wanting some internal evidence of the Morning Prayer being at first said betimes,—“O God, who hast safely brought us to the *beginning* of this day, defend us in the same,” being a phrase scarcely pertinent to any other prayers than orisons.³ On the contrary, there are,

¹ See Burnet, ii. 102.

² Wheatly, p. 267.

³ “The — day of September, 1559, the *New Morning Prayers* began now first at St. Antholin's in Budgrow, ringing at *five* in the morning.” — Strype's *Life of Grindal*, p. 27.

reasons still more satisfactory for thinking that the Litany was succeeded by the Communion Service without any pause whatever. In the injunctions of King Edward, put forth in 1547, there is one to this effect, that "immediately before *High Mass*, the priests, with other of the quire shall kneel in the midst of the church, and sing or say plainly and distinctly the *Litany* which is set forth in English with the suffrages following."¹ There is every reason to believe that this was in substance the Litany still in use, for it had already appeared in Henry's Primer; but however that might be, the union which it exhibits between such Litany, whatever it was, and the High Mass, prepares us to suppose that a similar arrangement was likely to ensue with regard to the same or any new Litany and the Communion Service. And that such did ensue is made still more manifest by the injunctions of Queen Elizabeth in the first year of her reign; in one of which the very same clause again occurs word for word, except that for "High Mass" there is actually substituted "the time of *communion of the sacrament*."² Indeed, the Communion Service could scarcely fail of being annexed to the Litany, since it soon came to pass that the former was seldom read throughout, the sacrament ceasing to be administered weekly as was at first contemplated, and recurring at least in country churches, as at present only five or six times a year.³ Nor is this all: in the first Common Prayer Book of Edward VI. it was ordered, that "upon Wednesdays and

¹ Bp. Sparrow's Collections, p. 8.

² Ibid. p. 72.

³ Herbert's Country Parson, p. 76.

Fridays, though there were none to communicate with the priest, yet, *after the Litany ended*, the priest should put upon him a plain alb or surplice with a cope, and say all things at the altar appointed to be said at the celebration of the Lord's Supper until after the offertory." Whence it is clear, that when there were persons to communicate (which the rubric seems to presume would always be the case on Sundays), the Litany and Communion Service went together; and that when there were none such, still the Litany was immediately followed by the Communion Service as far as to the end of the prayer for the whole state of Christ's church militant. How long this arrangement continued does not appear; but whether from the difficulty of gathering together a congregation at break of day, discipline being now relaxed, or from whatever other cause, within the first century after the Reformation the Church seems to have lapsed into the present practice, and to have combined its services into one. Bishop Hall in his *Contemplations* makes the incident mentioned in the first Book of Samuel, — that "they of Ashdod arose *early* on the morrow" to visit Dagon, — a vehicle for reproof of the lukewarmness of his own times, saying, "The morning is fittest for devotion; then do the Philistines flock to the temple of their god;" and adding, "What a shame it is *for us to come late to ours*¹!" as though in his day, and he died in 1656, at the age of eighty-two, there were generally matins no longer. And Herbert, in describing categorically the Sunday

¹ *Contempl. lib. xii.*

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duties of his Country Parson, expresses himself to the same effect : — “ Having read divine service,” says he, “ *twice fully*, and preached in the morning and catechised in the afternoon, he thinks he hath, in some measure, according to poor and frail man, discharged the public duties of the congregation.”¹

The length of our church service, therefore, of which we now hear so much, and the repetitions it contains, are evils, if evils they be, which have been practically existing almost from its first formation ; which a Hammond, a Sanderson, and a Taylor could tolerate without a complaint, but too happy, (as were then their congregations also, for those were not fastidious days,) if they were permitted in their secret assemblies to give utterance to these burning words with which the great Reformers had furnished them ; not scrupulously counting how often they were taught to pour forth the Lord's Prayer ; as they counted not how often they were taught to cry out, in the self-same phrase for the Lord to have mercy upon them ; as David counted not how often he exclaimed “ My son, my son ; ” ~~for~~ as these critics themselves, it is presumed, would not count their own iterations when they were suing earnestly for their lives. Such are not vain repetitions ; and it is to be hoped, that an age so little fitted for the task as this by any theological attainments, will pause before it attempts to improve upon the labours of a Cranmer, who, according to the testimony of one of the ripest scholars of his time, Peter Martyr, nor he by any means a

creature of the archbishop, "had diligently noted with his own hand every one of the fathers; had digested into particular chapters, with a view to the controversies of his day, councils, canons, and popes' decrees pertaining thereto, with a toil, and diligence, and exactness, which would seem incredible to any but an eye-witness; who both publicly and privately, and by a marvellous strength of learning, quickness of wit, and dexterity of management, had asserted what he held to be true from the thorny and intricate cavils of sophisters¹;" and who pronounced concerning this very Book of Common Prayer, "that no man could mislike that godly book that had any godliness in him joined with knowledge²:"—Moreover that an age, which for a long time, unchastened by any national calamity, has suffered much of that spirit of devotion to escape which animated the holy men of old, who were ever compelled to walk with their lives in their hand, and who were, in fact, called upon at length to lay them down, will not be allowed to communicate its narcotic influence to our Liturgy, and quench in any degree the ashes of the martyrs. In truth, it is impossible to contemplate the projects of our Liturgical Reformers without something of alarm, lest, whilst with the best intentions in the world they "dandle the kid," they should clumsily kill him nevertheless.

If, however, changes there must be after all, — if old things must here, too, pass away, and all things become new,—be the conditions those pro-

¹ Strype's Cranmer, p. 257.

² Strype's Annals, p. 87.

posed by the sagacious South, and all apprehensions will be hushed. "Let us but have our Liturgy continued to us, as it is, till the persons are born who shall be able to mend it, or make a better; and we desire no greater security against either the altering this, or introducing another."¹

Besides providing these various forms of public devotion, our Reformers extended their care to those of the closet and household; and in "The Primer, or Book of Private Prayer, needful to be used of all Christians" (for so its title runs), and of which numerous editions appeared from the dawn of the Reformation under Henry down to the accession of Mary, successively portraying its progress by their improvements upon one another, scriptural petitions are contained suitable to all sorts and conditions of men, and almost to every state of body or mind to which they are liable. Here are graces before meat; — addresses to God "both when we wake and when we seek his gift of sleep;" — when we are "very sick," and when our health is recovered; — for such as have an unquiet conscience, or an injured name; — for such as are in poverty or affluence; — for kings and judges, gentlemen and merchants, lawyers and labourers, parents and children, husbands and wives, masters and servants; — significant all, of the manner in which the Reformers laboured to introduce a religious principle into all the relations and transactions of life whatsoever; to extend its influence over the whole of society, so that like Elisha stretched upon the dead child (to use an illustration of Jeremy Tay-

¹ Epistle Dedicatory to the University of Oxford, prefixed to vol. vii. of his sermons. ed. 1722. 8vo. *

lor's), it might give life and animation to every part of the body politic. There is much simplicity and beauty in the following prayers "for Landlords," and "for Householders," which are extracted as specimens of a work now but little known, having been overlaid by the extempore effusions of the days of Cromwell, and never having recovered itself, like the Book of Common Prayer, since ¹: —

"FOR LANDLORDS.

"The earth is thine, O Lord, and all that is contained therein; notwithstanding thou hast given the possession thereof to the children of men, to pass over the time of their short pilgrimage in this vale of misery. We heartily pray thee to send thy Holy Spirit into the hearts of them that possess the grounds, pastures, and dwelling-places of the earth; that they, remembering themselves to be thy tenants, may not

¹ They are here given from a reprint of the last Primer of Edward VI., by the Rev. H. Walter. — King Henry's Primer, printed by Grafton in 1546, though containing some prayers of a more private nature, is in general an abridged translation of the Breviary; intended for the use of a congregation, (see Sparrow's Collection, p. 11.) and furnished with a Litany nearly the same as that in our Book of Common Prayer. These publications, therefore, though bearing the same name of Primer, (which, indeed, seems to have been applied to many forms of devotion published in those times,) are, in themselves, very different works. Probably the Prayer Book having been put forth in the interval superseded all other public forms, and thenceforward the Primer was adapted to the use of the closet only. *

rack and stretch out the rents of their houses and lands ; nor yet take unreasonable fines and incomes, after the manner of covetous worldlings ; but so let them out to other, that the inhabitants thereof may be able both to pay the rents, and also honestly to live to nourish their family, and to relieve the poor. Give them grace also to consider that they are but strangers and pilgrims in this world, having here no dwelling-place, but seeking one to come ; that they, remembering the short continuance of their life, may be content with that is sufficient, and not join house to house, nor couple land to land, to the impoverishment of others ; but so behave themselves in letting out their tenements, lands, and pastures, that after this life they may be received into everlasting dwelling-places, through Jesus Christ our Lord." .

“ FOR HOUSEHOLDERS.

“ To have children and servants is thy blessing, O Lord ! but not to order them according to thy word deserveth thy dreadful curse ; grant, therefore, that as thou hast blessed me with an household, so I may diligently watch, that nothing may be committed of the same that may offend thy fatherly goodness, and be an occasion of turning thy blessing into a curse ; but that so many as thou hast committed to my charge may eschew all vice, embrace all virtue ; live in thy fear ; call upon thy holy name ; learn thy blessed commandments ; hear thy holy word ; and avoiding idleness, diligently exercise themselves every one in his office, according to their vocation and

calling, unto the glory of thy most honourable name."

Thus far have we accompanied our Reformers in their attempt to raise up a Church of England, and to establish its doctrines. One important work more under this head remained still to be done, and to that we must now advert; the composition of a set of *Articles* which should speak with authority the opinions of the church, and secure uniformity amongst its teachers. Cranmer had entertained this difficult project in his thoughts long before he executed it; and the spirit in which he buckled himself to the work may be collected from some demonstrations which he had previously made. The natural effect of the Reformation had been to put in motion various conflicting opinions upon matters of faith and practice; every man challenging to himself the right of private judgment, and many, no doubt, abusing it; for any principle, however good, may be misapplied. It was, accordingly, the devout wish of many of the leading Reformers, both on the Continent and in this country, that some general creed should be drawn up by a congress of learned men of all nations, which should bind the whole Protestant church together, and put an end to these mischievous divisions of heart. Melancthon appears especially to have pressed such a scheme upon Cranmer, whom, in his turn, he found nothing loth to pursue it¹; for he seems to have entered into a correspondence on the subject with some of the leading foreign Protestants;

¹ Strype's Cranmer, p. 410. Archbishop Laurence, Bampton Lectures, p. 37.

and Calvin's own letters (for to him he had written amongst others) bear testimony to the comprehensive views of our archbishop upon this great question.¹ It failed, however, as the same correspondence indicates; whether from the troubles at that time prevailing both at home and abroad; whether from the difficulty which must have been anticipated of constructing any single form which should be acceptable to so many parties holding so many opinions; or whether from the intrigues of the Council of Trent, then sitting, which taking alarm at the projected unanimity of their adversaries, and acting upon the old policy of divide and conquer, despatched their emissaries to the proper quarters, who feigning themselves zealous for the Reformation, and preaching those extravagant doctrines of the Anabaptists, which all sober-minded men lamented and condemned, scattered apples of discord amongst their enemies, and dissolved them as a body.² But, however this might be, the scheme was discovered to be impracticable, and Cranmer then contracted his views, and confined himself to the preparation of Articles for the Church of England only.³

It is of great importance to the right understanding of those which he at length drew up, to consider the spirit in which they were framed. Originating in the manner we have said, the principle which dictated them could scarcely have been one of exclusion, but was rather intended to allow a latitude, within certain limits,

¹ Bampton Lectures, Notes, p. 232.

² Strype's Cranmer, pp. 207, 208.

³ Bampton Lectures, p. 233.

to a conscientious difference of opinion; and to make the fiery scorpion of bigotry draw in its claws, and concede a just portion of the heavens to other pretensions besides its own. That the spirit of our Articles was thus catholic, became apparent in the actual working of them; and accordingly, when the exclusive doctrines of Calvin triumphed for a season in this country, and the Westminster divines were called upon to remodel the church, one of their first acts was to review the Articles, (a task which they did not complete, probably finding it a business of too much moderation to suit their present temper,) with the express design of rendering them "more determinate in favour of Calvinism¹;" and a similar attack appears to have been meditated upon them by the same party at the Savoy conference after the Restoration²: sufficient testimonies these, that the exclusionists did, in fact, feel the Articles (however they may have laid violent claim to them as their own) to be conceived in a temper inconveniently liberal, and the net of Cranmer and his coadjutors to have been cast, in this instance, too wide to meet their approbation.

Nor will a closer examination of the history of their actual composition lead to any other result. For the model upon which those of Cranmer of 1553 were formed was the Confession of Augsburg, which was strictly a Lutheran Confession, Melancthon himself having drawn it up;

¹ Neal's Hist. of the Puritans, iii. 55., and Append. n. 7. where the amended articles may be seen.

² Id. iv. p. 298.

and it is a curious fact, and like another to which allusion has already been made (the frequent invitations sent to this great Reformer to repair to England and take part in building up her church), a fact indicating the influence which his character and opinions exercised on the ecclesiastical proceedings of this country at that time, that the divinity professorship in Cambridge, which was vacated by Bucer's death, in 1551, was not filled up for two years, apparently in the hope that Melancthon (for whom it was intended) would be persuaded to come over and occupy it¹; the interval being precisely that in which the Articles were concocted. Nor may it be impertinent to remark, that on their revision under Archbishop Parker, previous to 1562, care was taken to draw from the same, or at least a similar, fountain for what was wanting; the additions and emendations bearing token, both in their matter and language, of having been derived from the Confession of Wirtemberg; a Confession composed in 1551 and exhibited at the Council of Trent the following year, and which, like that of Augsburg, was not Calvinistic, nor Zuinglian, but Lutheran.² Indeed, nothing can be more erroneous than to measure the contemporary by the posthumous influence of a great name. Milton is not mentioned by Lord Clarendon (who forgets nobody that stamped his own times), nor yet by Baxter, whose writings are voluminous, and by whom it was to be expected that he would be had in honour. And in like manner, splendid as even-

¹ Bampton Lect. p. 234.

² Bampton Lect. pp. 45. 240.

tually became the fame of Calvin, it was comparatively inconsiderable when our church was in building, being eclipsed by the burning and shining light of Luther's name; so that whilst a sermon of the latter is advertised in England in 1547, as a work "of the famous clerk of *worthy memory*, Dr. Martin Luther," a treatise of Calvin is sent forth in 1549 (two years later), as "written by Master John Calvin, a man of *right excellent learning and no less conversation*," as though his fame as yet required the help of a herald¹: neither, it may be observed, does the term Calvinist find a place in the pages of Fox. And though a body of men there was in the times of our first Reformers, and by them certainly accounted schismatics, to whom the name of *Free-Willers* was given, (and a singular instance of the predominance of the intellectual over the mere animal part of our nature it is, that the metaphysical questions to which the name points should have disturbed the prison-house of persons who were about to die, perhaps on the morrow, at the stake²;) still the tenets of these men were not such as were afterwards called Arminian, but were strictly Pelagian, being in gross disparagement of a Redeemer's merits, and of a Sanctifier's help, and as such were stoutly combated by the founders of our Church.³ That the freedom of the will was not, in itself, a doctrine offensive to Cranmer, but the contrary, is certain;

¹ See Hampton Lect. p. 243. Strype's Eccles. Mem. ii. 28.

² Strype's Cranmer, p. 350.

³ Strype's Cranmer, Append. p. 195.; and *Annals* p. 207.

and in a Letter to Cromwell, recently published¹ from an original manuscript in the Chapter-house at Westminster, the Archbishop, speaking of the seditious conduct of one Sir Thomas Baschurch, a priest, writes, "At April next coming it shall be three years since the said Sir Thomas fell into despair, and thereby into a sickness, so that he was in peril of death. Of this sickness, within a quarter of a year after, he recovered, but saith he is assured that he shall be perpetually damned. *My chaplains and divers other learned men have reasoned with him*, but no man can bring him to other opinion but that he, like unto Esau, was created unto damnation; and hath, divers times and sundry ways, attempted to kill himself; but by diligent looking unto he hath hitherto been preserved."

Moreover, the selection which Cranmer made of Erasmus's Paraphrase, as the exposition of Scripture of which every church was to have a copy, argues no Calvinistic prejudices, but the very reverse.

The true key, indeed, to the right understanding of the articles (as was already observed with regard to the homilies) is not so much the doctrine of Calvin as of the schoolmen; the controversy lying chiefly between the Protestant and Catholic, and in its paramount interest and importance absorbing for a season every other. Thus the article of "Original Sin" is urged with a reference to the scholastic dogma, that original sin was a mere defect of original righteousness, the latter being a quality super-

¹ Todd's Life of Cranmer, i. 201.

induced, and not "the fault and corruption of the nature of every man;" — the article of "Works before Justification," with a similar view to another theory of the subtle doctors that by a certain meritorious meetness, *à priori*, for the reception of God's grace, the party claimed it as a right, *de congruo*, and that having once received it, he then claimed its further extension as a right, *de condigno*.¹ These opinions, so calculated to puff up by making man the originator of his own justification, our Reformers would not tolerate, and framed their confessions accordingly. It would not fall within the plan of a work like the present to enter more minutely into these investigations, which, after all, are as an hedge of thorns; suffice it to have pointed out the general principle which should not be lost sight of in forming our judgment of the articles. Thus considered they will be scarcely thought to determine, or to be intended to determine, the peculiar points of Calvinistic controversy either way: they will be rather thought to be composed simply for the purpose assigned in the title prefixed to the original articles, "for the *avoiding of controversy* in opinions, and the establishment of a *godly concord* in certain matters of religion²;" an object which was not likely to be obtained by the decided adoption of any party views, be that party what it might; and, therefore, King James, according to his declaration

¹ Archbishop Laurence, Bampton Lectures, Sermon iv. and v. This subject is treated by Luther with great power in his Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians; see particularly ch. ii. v. 16.

² See Todd's Cranmer, ii. 291.

prefixed to the Articles, "took comfort that all clergymen within his realm had always most willingly subscribed to the Articles established, which is an argument (he adds) that they all agree in the true usual literal meaning of the said Articles, and that even in those curious points in which the present differences lie, men of all sorts take the Articles of the Church of England to be for them." Yet nothing can be more certain than that in the time of James the divisions of opinion upon speculative points of theology were both wide and numerous; high and low church principles (as they are called) never having been more violently opposed to each other than then. Here, therefore, as in all other of their measures, did the Reformers make their moderation known unto all men, not hoping or desiring to confine religious opinion so closely as thereby to prejudice religious sincerity, nor expecting that the pyramid of a national Church would stand firm when set upon an apex instead of a base.

On a review of these several works by which the Church of England was restored, it can scarcely fail to be matter of admiration and wonder, that so fair a fabric should have risen under the hands of the Reformers out of such disorder, almost at once; that in the very agony of a first attempt they should have thrown off a comprehensive scheme of doctrine and devotion which scarcely called for any subsequent revision; that they should not only have hewn out such admirable materials, but have brought them, too, in so short a season, to so excellent a work. In this our day (overcast and troubled as it is) we can, perhaps, scarcely transfer ourselves, even in

imagination, to the tumultuous age of a Cranmer and a Ridley, or fully appreciate the sagacity which, under God's blessing, conducted them through such conflicting elements with such signal triumph. Yet so it was; and with the gorgeous ceremonies of the church they had grown up in soliciting their senses on the one hand, endeared, too, by all the holy recollections of their youth and even manhood; and contempt for all decency of apparel and ritual, the natural re-action of former abuses, assailing them on the other; these judicious men yielded themselves to neither extreme, but adopting the *middle way*, (alas! that Milton should bestow upon them no better title for this than that of halting prelates¹;) left us a church alike removed from ostentation and meanness, from admiration of ornament and disdain of it; a church retaining so much reverence for ancient customs and ancient forms, as not rashly to abolish them, and only so much as not to adopt them blindly. Under the guidance of this principle it was brought to pass that though this same church was not made to discover the material flesh and blood of our Lord in the communion, it was taught to discover (whatever Bishop Hoadley may say to the contrary) more than mere commemorative emblems; that while she does not presume to limit the regenerating influence of the Holy Ghost to the single mode of baptism, and exclude from all possible admission into heaven every soul of man which has not partaken of that rite, for "the Spirit

¹ Prose Works, edited by George Burnett, i. 7.

which works by means may not be tied to means¹," she declares it generally necessary to salvation; that whilst she teaches the absolute need of a Saviour and of a Spirit, to restore in us that image of God which was grievously defaced by the fall, and imputes such restoration to the merits of a Saviour and the influence of the Spirit, she thinks it of inferior consequence to determine how far gone from original righteousness we may be, resting satisfied with the assertion (to the truth of which every one who knows his own heart must subscribe) that we are at any rate "very far gone," "*quam longissime*," as far as it is possible, consistently with the possession of a moral nature at all, and responsibility for our actions; that whilst she does not allow marriage to be a sacrament, as remembering that it is no ratified means of grace, still less does she regard it as a civil contract, as remembering, also, that in it is signified the spiritual marriage and unity of Christ and his church, and that male and female God joined together; that whilst she does not enforce, on pain of damnation, confession to the priest, or hold the act to be essential to the forgiveness of the sin, she, nevertheless, solemnly exhorts such persons as have a troubled conscience, and know not how to quiet it, to go to a minister of God and open to him their grief, that they may receive from him the benefit of absolution, together with ghostly counsel and advice.

With such discretion did our Reformers retain the good which was in the Church of Rome

¹ Bishop Hall, Ep. Decad. iv. 4.

whilst they rejected the evil, putting the one in vessels to be kept, and casting the other away; with such temper did they refuse to be scared by the abuses of past times, or the scrupulosities of their own, into narrowing needlessly that ground on which they invited a nation to take its stand, and which they well knew must be broad to admit of it. And so it came about, that a form of faith and worship was conceived which recommended itself to the piety and good sense of the people; to which they reverted with gladness of heart when evil times afterwards compelled them to abjure it for a season; towards which, those who have since dissented and withdrawn from it have so often seen occasion (or if not they, their children after them,) to retrace their steps, and tacitly to acknowledge that whilst they sought meat for their lust, they had rejected angels' food.

God grant that a church which has now for nearly three centuries, amidst every extravagance of doctrine and discipline which has sprung up around her, still carried herself as the mediator, chastening the zealot by words of soberness, and animating the luke-warm by words that burn; — that a church which has been found on experience to have successfully promoted a quiet and unobtrusive and practical piety amongst the people, such as comes not of observation, but is seen in the conscientious discharge of all those duties of imperfect obligation which are the bonds of peace, but which laws cannot reach, — that such a church may live through these troubled times to train up our children in the fear of God, when we are in our graves; and that no

strong delusion sent amongst us may prevail to her overthrow, and to the eventual discomfiture (as they would find too late to their cost) of many who have thoughtlessly and ungratefully lifted up their heel against her !

CHAPTER XI.

HOOPER.—PURITANS.—EXPECTATIONS OF THE ROMAN CATHOLICS.—EDWARD'S DEATH.—LADY JANE GREY.

BUT though the leading Reformers were men of moderation, there was a party now growing up in the Church of another temper, and a more rigid mould. Hooper, the type of it at that time, had resided for some years amongst the foreign Protestants of Germany and Switzerland, where the promulgation of the Interim, a half measure, uniting something of Popish forms with something of Protestant principles, had put men upon considering the question concerning the use of things indifferent. He took the side of the more rigorous casuists; and, accordingly, when the bishopric of Gloucester was offered him, (for he was one of the most sharp and searching preachers of his day, and of a conscience above fear or favour, sometimes, perhaps, above reason too,) he alleged certain scruples, in which he was seconded by John à Lasco, and the churches of the strangers in England, chiefly touching the episcopal habits, which then consisted, besides the rochet of white linen as still worn, of a chimere or robe, to which the lawn sleeves are attached, of scarlet silk. The latter gorgeous article of dress, which was not superseded by the black satin at present worn, till the reign of Elizabeth, seems to have been the chief offence

to Hooper, who accordingly for a while declined the mitre. Here was the beginning of those troubles which, however respectable in their origin, were soon destined to make havoc of the Church's peace; and Hooper is one of the few bishops (for a bishop he eventually became) on whom the Puritans of every age, not excepting even Neal himself, have looked with an eye of favour. It seems a strange thing to us, that men should have been ever found ready to make shipwreck of charity, and to risk the Reformation altogether (for the Roman Catholics were on the alert to profit by the divisions) upon matters so unimportant in themselves as the colour or material of a coat; or that such precisians should have been met with as expected, and required the actual warrant of Scripture for every trivial matter which they did throughout the day, to the utter extinction of Christian liberty¹: yet the number of such persons grew and prevailed; and though Hooker in his great work, now but little read, because to our apprehensions so large a portion of it is occupied in fighting with shadows, no shadows however then, did his best, as did Sanderson his most learned contemporary², to stave off the crisis; it came with the rebellion nevertheless, when a morbid conscience gave

¹ Warburton imagines that there was a political feeling coupled with this scruple. Such a principle, pursued through its necessary deductions, leading to a reformation of the *Civil* government on *Jewish* ideas. Alliance of Church and State, book i. sect. 4. note.

² See his two admirable Sermons, xi. and xii. ad Aulam, on 1 Cor. x. 23. "All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient; all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not."

place, as it often does, to fanaticism or hypocrisy, and the substantial fruits of the Spirit were lost in real or pretended paroxysms. Surely the kingdom of God is not meat and drink. St. Paul in all his epistles deals boldly with such beggarly elements; nor does the example of our Lord himself sanction scruples merely fastidious. He did not listen to the accusations against his disciples that they had plucked the ears of corn on the Sabbath day, or that they had eaten with unwashed hands; and it is remarkable that, though according to the strict letter of the Levitical law, the Passover was to be partaken of with loins girded, and shoes on the feet, and a staff in the hand, and in haste, Jesus appears to have acquiesced in a custom long established, and to have sat down with his disciples, and to have conversed with them at his leisure, one of them leaning upon his bosom.

An attempt has been made by some to claim Cranmer as belonging to the same party in his heart, howbeit restrained by force of circumstances from fully declaring himself. They would persuade us that he was prepared to have gone much further in his Book of Common Prayer, (such, say they, was the report amongst the English exiles at Frankfort¹;) but that a wicked clergy and convocation held his hand; and that more was meant than met the ear, even when under the cruel mockery of his accusers, as they stripped him of the canvass pontificals in which they had arrayed him, he observed, "that it needed not; for he had done with that gear long

¹ Strype's Cranmer, p. 266.

before.”¹ That he set no greater store by the innocent trappings of his office than was due to them from a man of sense and piety may be well believed; he had already said as much: “If the bishops of this realm,” he remarks in a letter to Cromwell, “pass no more of their names, styles, and titles, than I do of mine, the King’s Highness shall soon order the matter betwixt us. For I pray God never to be merciful to me at the general judgment if I perceive in my heart that I set more by any title, name, or style, that I write, than I do by the paring of an apple, further than it shall be to the setting forth of God’s word and will.” Let it, however, be remembered, that these words were written by Cranmer in vindication of himself against the idle but malicious charge of Gardiner, that by assuming the title of “Primate of all England” he had trenched upon the King’s supremacy; and that the period at which they were written was the year 1535, when as yet the Puritan question had not been stirred.² But though the general character of the Archbishop’s mind, which was averse from extremes of every kind, is enough to oppose to any claim of this description, there are, besides, some distinct particulars in his history, which argue clearly enough that if he did not foresee the danger of the Puritan principle, he at least had no inclination to lend himself to its advancement. To Hooper’s imaginations he did not give place, no not for an hour, resolutely opposing even the King’s letter of recommendation

¹ Strype’s Cranmer, p. 375.

² Id. Append. No. xiv.

that the ceremonies used in consecration might in his particular case be dispensed with¹; a degree of obduracy this, at which the martyrologist (whose bias is well known) significantly hints, "for he will name nobody," as culpable in the Archbishop, and such as called for the Cross to put an end by a real and terrible visitation to unworthy contentions, and to unite men who ought never to have been divided, by making them partners in bonds and in death. Nor is this all; a trifle it may be, but still it is a trifle to our present purpose, and characteristic of the temper of Cranmer, a straw which tells the wind better than a stone, that a short passage which stands in the Latin text of his catechism, reflecting on the mysteries and other such mummeries as were then greatly followed by the English, and which at a very early time were caviare to the Puritan, is altogether omitted in the translation.² But, perhaps, the most decisive evidence of all is the spirit which pervades the whole sermon "of the Keys" in this same catechism; a sermon otherwise worth perusing, as setting a difficult subject in a satisfactory light. That preachers there must be, else how shall the people hear? that they must not of themselves "run to this high honour," else how are they "sent?" But if they be not sent, how shall they fruitfully teach; for it is not enough that the seed be sown, since God must also give the increase? Yet how can the bless-

¹ Strype's Cranmer, pp. 211, 212.

² Compare the Latin Catechism, p. 25., and the English, p. 34. See Grindal's opinion of these interludes. Strype's Life of Grindal, p. 82.

ing of God be looked for on means which he has not sanctioned? What surety is there that though the self-appointed minister work well, God will choose to work with him? But if not, what virtue can go out of the sacraments which he handles; what do baptism, absolution, and the Supper of the Lord become, but dead forms, Christ not being present with such preachers? That the right of ministration, therefore, derived from the apostles at first, who, in their turn, made "bishops and priests," ("sacerdotes," only, is the expression in the Latin,) is to continue unto the end of the world; but in the line appointed; and, accordingly, that good heed is to be taken of "false and privy preachers, which privily creep into cities, and preach in corners, having none authority, nor being called to this office." This is not the language of the Puritan; yet was Cranmer certainly opposed to many of the remnants of the Church of Rome, in themselves indifferent; to the use of the old altars instead of tables, which it was proposed to substitute for them; to candles at Candlemas; to ashes on Ash Wednesday, and the like; all matters for which the people were still clamorous, but with which he saw that they were not to be trusted; and thus did he lay himself open to alternate charges of ~~over-much~~ and over-little scrupulosity; according to the quarter from which the objection came, sufficient in themselves to argue that he chose out a path between either extreme, which was the safest and best of all. There is something probably very significant of Cranmer's own temper as a reformer, in the terms of a letter which he addresses to Cromwell, soliciting preferment

for one John Wakefield, "gentleman" as he is called, comptroller of his own household. The qualities which, according to the Archbishop's notions, recommend him to the King's patronage are these:—"A good judgment and affection towards God's word, which for the space of twelve years" (the term of Cranmer's acquaintance with him) "he had always been ready to promote in his country, not rashly nor seditiously, but gently and soberly; so that his own country could neither greatly hate him nor love him. They could not hate him, for his kindness and gentleness, being ready to do every man good as much as in his power was; and yet they could not heartily love him, because he ever commended the knowledge of God's word, studied it himself diligently, and exhorted them unto the same; and spake many times against the abusions of the clergy, for which he had all the hate that most of the clergy could procure against him."¹ A character of this complexion, moderation the leading feature of it, was not the one to win upon a patron, himself prepared to rush into the extremes of the Puritans.

But the reign of a minor, which was favourable to the growth of that party, indeed Edward had himself, perhaps, a leaning to their opinions, was not unfriendly to the further pillage of the Church. Here, therefore, Cranmer had again to interpose, that in this instance he might protect the temporalities, as in the other he had protected

¹ This letter is given from an original MS. in Mr. Todd's new Life of Cranmer, i. 205.

the doctrines of the Establishment. The division of the abbey-lands amongst the nobles seems to have begot a general taste amongst the upper classes for expense, and consequent appetite for spoil—it grew by what it fed on. Rents were raised to an extravagant height; the farm for which Latimer's father paid from three to four pounds a year, and which enabled him to send a man and horse to the King's service, and to portion his daughters with five pounds a-piece, was, in Latimer's own time, let for sixteen pounds or more, to the utter impoverishment of the occupier.¹ The waste lands were every where enclosed for sheep-walks (the wool trade having now become considerable), to the annihilation of those ancient rights of pasturage which the neighbouring peasantry enjoyed, and to the fomentation of fierce rebellions throughout the country.² Now it happened that the chantries or chapels endowed by individuals for private masses had survived the spoliation of Henry; these it was proposed should be given to the King (which was another word for the nobles through the King), and an act of parliament to that effect was passed in 1547, in spite of the opposition of the bishops, and of Cranmer above all, who had been in hopes of reserving these endowments till Edward should come of age, and then inducing him to assign them to the relief of the numerous poor clergy whom the sale of tithes had left almost penniless. He had already resisted encroachments of the same kind

¹ Latimer's Sermon, i. 268.

² Strype's Cranmer, p. 185. Latimer's Sermon, i. 268.

under Henry, beseeching him that there should be no alienation of church lands without the production, at least, of the royal warrant; many of the nobles being in the habit of seizing them in the King's name, though without any intention of appropriating them to the King's use. Moreover, in those exchanges with the see of Canterbury which the King himself proposed, Cranmer endeavoured to protect it in its just rights by soliciting Cromwell's opinion of the terms, "forasmuch as he himself was a man that had small experience in such cases, and had no mistrust at all in his prince¹;" and thus did he dexterously contrive to uphold and transmit to his successors an ample revenue in most dangerous times, and under a most despotic monarch. But the name of Edward could not be interposed with the same success between the nobles and their pleasure, and accordingly the see of Canterbury, nor that alone, is said to have suffered more under Edward than under Henry himself; for the old cry was raised of the luxury and covetousness of churchmen, and the old precedents of dispensing half a dozen prebends to one earl, and a deanery to another, (such had been the predicament of the Earl of Hertford, and of Cromwell²,) were again acted upon; and laymen were pensioned out of the bishoprics as they successively fell vacant³; and many of the best estates were taken away, so that the wealth-

¹ See an original Letter published in Mr. Todd's *Life of Cranmer*, i. 363.

² *Strype's Cranmer*, pp. 168. 279. *Burnet*, ii. 8.

³ *Strype's Cranmer*, p. 165.

iest sees could scarcely maintain their diocesan¹; and scholars were supplanted in the rewards of learning by their superiors in birth, to the decay of the universities and of letters in general; so that Ridley, now Bishop of London, Bonner having been deposed, being about to give Grindal a prebend in St. Paul's, is prevented by the council, it being their pleasure that the King should have it for the furniture of his stable, an indignity of which he loudly complains to Cheke, the King's tutor, urging him to speak out upon it in the proper quarter, or to let that his letter speak.² Nor was this all; commissioners were despatched into every part of England in the last year of Edward, to gather such gleanings as were still left in the shape of chantry-lands unsold, and furniture of churches; they were themselves, however, commonly forestalled by the people, so that, according to Heylyn, "many private men's parlours were now hung with altar-cloths, their tables and beds covered with copes instead of carpets and coverlids, and many made carousing cups of the sacred chalices, as once Belshazzar celebrated his drunken feast in the sanctified vessels of the Temple."³ Thus the locusts took

¹ Burnet, ii. 209.

² Burnet, iii. 197.

³ Heylyn's *Hist. of Reformation*, fol. p. 194. There may be something of high colouring in this picture of spoliation; for Heylyn (who dedicates to Charles II.) had, as is well known, a strong anti-puritan bias, which is particularly apparent in the unfavourable complexion he gives to Edward's reign in general, and in the unfair, though self-contradictory, terms, in which he speaks of his individual character: indeed, so strangely is he sometimes

what had escaped from the hail.* How much further this dissipation of church property would have been carried had Edward continued longer to fill the throne, it is impossible to tell; certain it is, that it received a check from the restoration of the Roman Catholic religion, for a season, under Mary; and amongst the mysterious ways in which Providence works out its own ends, that otherwise fatal reign might be the appointed barrier for securing a reasonable provision still for the Church of England, and thereby an efficient, because an intelligent and independent, clergy. For the Roman Catholic party began now to be enlisted by the dictates of common prudence on the conservative side. The signs of the times, which were watched by all men with extreme anxiety, were seen to be in their favour. The Princess Mary was a rallying point for the partisans of the Church of Rome during the whole of Edward's reign, more suited to the office than a much cleverer woman less firm of purpose. Her brother had reluctantly winked at the use of the mass in her own chapel when it was forbidden elsewhere, hoping to win her to a different mind, till the permission being abused, was at length withdrawn, not, however, abruptly, for the affair was pending, out of delicacy to her scruples, from June, 1549, to September, 1551; when the

at variance with himself on this subject, that he might almost be thought to have written for one set of readers and revised for another. Still the weakness of a minority is seen at this period, — the more so after the rule of a Henry, — *solitæque jugum gravitate carebat.*

council at length wrote to her, that her Grace's example "hindered the good weal of the realm, *which thing they thought was not unknown to her.*"¹ But the spirits of the Romanists were not to be thus broken down. For the three last years of Edward's reign their confidence was perpetually on the increase. The life of the Princess was seen to be of fairer promise than the King's; and an eye to the character of the next in the succession is a striking political feature of the times of which we are treating, when the balance between contending factions was as yet scarcely struck either way. The nobles who espoused the cause of the Reformers were at strife amongst themselves; Somerset contending with his brother, the admiral, even to the death; himself beheaded in his turn, and succeeded as Protector by the Earl of Warwick, afterwards Duke of Northumberland, a man unpopular and suspected. The adversaries of the Reformation were not slow to take advantage of the disorder. Whilst the government was united, many leading persons amongst them had recanted, and even Bonner and Gardiner "began to condescend," as Fox expresses it, "to good conformity;" but they now took heart, turned about, and braved a persecution which was likely to be short, and which was sure to recommend them to the future sovereign.

On the other hand, the friends of the Reformation, reading these prognostics the other way, had fearful forebodings of evils to come, and

¹ Fox, ii. 707.

were naturally cast down. The feverish condition of the public mind is seen in the restless solicitude with which they treasured such omens up. The execution of the Protector; the death of the Duke of Suffolk and his brother by the sweating sickness, the sons of a father who was Cranmer's good friend, and themselves children of great hope; the loss of Fagius and Bucer at a critical moment, were all accounted harbingers of ill.¹ John Knox, too, like another son of Ananus, lifted up his voice in various parts of England; and as he marked the tide again setting in towards Rome, foretold for England unquiet times, *hiemem instare*²: and, indeed, the general agitation of those days, that feeling so forcibly expressed in the language of Scripture, by "distress of nations with perplexity," is strongly portrayed by an act of parliament which was passed in 1550, "Against spreading of Prophecies," as well as by the numbers of idle stories of unnatural births and sea-monsters which were then propagated, and which are faithfully preserved in the pages of the Chroniclers.³ Charity leads us to trust that the dark insinuations against the Duke of Northumberland (as though he hastened the end of Edward for the purpose of setting the crown on the head of Lady Jane Grey, who had married his son,) had no other foundation than the intense anxiety with which the life of the King was thus regarded by multi-

¹ Strype's Cranmer, 313.

² Id. 360.

³ See Sir John Hayward's Life and Reign of Edward VI. given in Kennett's Hist. of England.

tudes of his subjects, who saw no other hope for themselves or for their cause than the frail one its continuance afforded. Certain it is, that the extracts given by Strype from Cranmer's letters to Cecil, who was in attendance upon the court in a progress through England, the year before the King's death, cannot be fairly interpreted (though the honest annalist is of a contrary opinion) as implying that the Archbishop was then under any apprehensions for Edward's personal safety.¹ And it is very possible; that when the "wise woman" was called in at last (the case becoming desperate), the patient should have grown rapidly worse, without any further imputation upon the empiric than presumption for having attempted the cure, or upon the Protector than folly for having permitted the attempt to be made.² But if we acquit Northumberland of treason, it is not so easy to acquit him of treachery; for that the dying prince should have made a will, not merely withholding the crown from its rightful owner, the Princess Mary, (for considering the hearty desire he entertained for the maintenance of the Protestant cause this might have been his own act and deed,) but from his sister Elizabeth, herself a Protestant, and to settle it upon a cousin who happened to be the duke's daughter-in-law, this looks like the machination of another head than his own. This will Cranmer long refused to subscribe; but at last, over-persuaded by the authority of the judges,

¹ Strype's Cranmer, p 283.

² Burnet, ii. 224.

all of whom, except Judge Hales, concurred in it, and above all, by the entreaties of Edward himself, who represented the hopeless condition to which the Reformation would be reduced by acquiescing in the natural descent of the crown (as if the wrath of man was to work the righteousness of God), in an evil hour, he took the pen and signed the document and what was tantamount to his own death-warrant together.

And now Edward, having finished his short but saintly course, his sixteenth year not yet completed, commended his people to God, especially beseeching him that he "would defend his realm from papistry;" and then, as he sunk in the arms of Sir Henry Sidney, he exclaimed, "I am faint; Lord, have mercy on me, and receive my spirit;" and so he departed. Thus ended this reign of mercy: for ill as the principle of toleration was in those days understood, violently as it had been outraged by Henry, who preceded, and as it was destined to be by Mary, who followed him, during the six years that Edward sat upon the throne, neither in Smithfield, nor in any other quarter of the realm, did any man suffer for religious opinion, whether Catholic or Protestant, save the two of whom mention has been made already—the Dutchman and Joan of Kent.¹ And even in cases of imprisonment and deprivation, as in those of Bonner, Bishop of London, and Gardiner, Bishop of Winchester, the parties were proceeded against rather as political than religious delinquents, rather as rebels than

¹ Fox, ii. 554.

heretics; a doctrine being sedulously taught by these and other leaders of the Catholic party, and echoed back both by the Princess Mary and by the insurgents of Devon, that neither were the decrees of the council binding, the regal power not being transferable, nor yet those of the King, he being still a minor; wherefore, that the laws of the land, as Henry left them, were those which were to be obeyed until the king should come of age, and none other.¹ It is obvious that such a principle, generally acknowledged and acted upon, would have ended in leaving the country without any government at all; for if the old statutes should prove inapplicable to an unforeseen emergency, and there were no authority adequate to supply the defect, anarchy must ensue. It is true that advantage was sometimes taken of overt acts of non-conformity on which to prosecute, because where there might be moral, there might not be legal, evidence of disaffection, the offence being difficult of proof; still here the gravamen no doubt lay of many of the charges preferred against the Roman Catholic dignitaries, and of the penalties inflicted on them in the reign of Edward; and the necessity which lay upon the council of seeing that the commonwealth took no damage at their hands in those dangerous times, may be thought to excuse proceedings which, however, were attended by some aggravating circumstances of rigour but too common in those days.

It is impossible to contemplate the death of

¹ Burnet, ii. 127. 165.

Edward without feeling for Cranmer and his colleagues in the Reformation. Their hearts might well sink within them in that hour. They had gone boldly forward in their great enterprise, beholding the danger before their eyes, for they could not be blind to it, but determined to do their duty and fear not; exasperating the Catholic party, headed as it was by a most bigoted princess, then the presumptive, now the actual, possessor of the throne; nor shrinking from incurring her personal displeasure, where the interests of religion required the risk, by the honest counsel they gave with respect to the concessions due to her, or the privileges which it was fitting to deny or to resume. Now they were in the situation which they must have long foreseen was likely to be their lot — at the mercy of an implacable foe. And the days and nights of anxiety which they must have spent at this crisis, waiting for the policy of Mary to disclose itself, must be carried to the account of those silent sufferings which formed no small part of the purchase-money paid for the church they bequeathed to us, and which were more insupportable, perhaps, however less imposing, than the fire and the faggot itself.

CHAPTER XII.

MARY.—SUPPRESSION OF THE REFORMATION.—PERSECUTION OF THE REFORMERS.—FOX'S ACTS AND MONUMENTS.

THAT God seeth not as ~~man~~ seeth, is a truth which he, who reads history aright, must soon be taught. Cranmer, overcome by his apprehensions for the safety of the reformed church under a Catholic queen, had acted from a principle of expediency, and placed, as far as an individual could, the Lady Jane Grey on a throne which did not belong to her. Had the event turned out as he hoped, had ~~her~~ seat been established, and Mary been set aside for ever, it is probable that the Protestant cause, the very object which this act of injustice was meant to serve, would never have been so successful, as it proved; for it would have been still further stripped of its temporal supports, and it would not have been consecrated by the blood of the martyr. God therefore ordained for it the fiery trial; and the Lady Jane was deposed almost as soon as she was proclaimed, to make way for her sincere but narrow-minded successor.

Cranmer has fallen upon evil tongues, both in his life and in his memory. A report was spread that he had declared for the mass; and, indeed, that it had been actually restored, under his sanction,

in his own cathedral at Canterbury; a charge which he repelled in terms the most indignant, saying, that it was not he that set it up there, but "a false, flattering, lying, and dissembling monk," one Dr. Thornden, whilst at the same time he challenged the adversaries of the Reformation to a public discussion of its principles, the soundness of which he undertook, to maintain. Yet Neal, who was not ignorant of these facts, ungenerously keeps them back till he has indulged in the repetition of the slander¹; thus doling out reluctant and compulsive justice to a man whose character Protestants ought surely to protect with jealousy, be their denomination what it may. The challenge, however, though it was not accepted was not overlooked; and Cranmer was cited before the Queen's commissioners, whether upon the charge of heresy or treason or both, and was ordered to keep his house at Lambeth. In the interval which elapsed before he was finally committed to the Tower, he had probably ample opportunity to escape, and was urged by his friends to profit by it, but a sense of what was due to himself, and to those who looked up to him as the leader of the Reformation in England, constrained him; and whilst he advised the less conspicuous persons of his party to flee for their lives, as not being so deeply pledged, as not in the same degree prejudicing their cause by the abandonment of their country, and as having Scripture for their warrant if they fled, he determined for himself to

¹ Hist. of the Puritans, part i. chap. iii. at the beginning.

abide the issue come what might, and if it was so required, to be faithful even unto death. Perhaps, too, for himself, he might reckon upon some grateful recollection in Mary, that her life had been spared by her father at his intercession, and some reluctance on her part to shed the blood of a man who had saved her as a daughter, though he had done her some wrong as a queen. But Mary's gratitude was too brief, or her bigotry too vehement, to admit of this; and even Sir James Hales, who had contended for her right of succession at the critical moment single-handed, was nevertheless committed to the Marshalsea, when, like an honest judge as he was, he acted at the quarter sessions upon the statutes of Henry and Edward touching the supremacy, which were still unrepealed, and refused to bend the laws of the land to the pleasure of the sovereign; and though he was not actually put to death at the instance of the government, yet life was made intolerable to him; so that having unsuccessfully attempted to end it with a knife whilst in prison, on his release he drowned himself in a river near his own house. The conduct of Mary was marked by the same ungrateful oblivion of services rendered to her in times past, in the case of the men of Suffolk. This was a county, in which, for whatever reason, the Reformation seems to have taken an earlier and deeper root than elsewhere; and accordingly, the Reformers of Suffolk, before they declared for Mary against the Lady Jane, stipulated for liberty of opinion in religious matters, to which proposal a "very hopeful answer" was given: — "She meant graciously not

to compel or strain other men's consciences otherwise than God should, as she trusted, put in their hearts a persuasion of the truth, through the opening of his word unto them." But no sooner was she firm in her seat, than she repeats the concession in an artful proclamation, with the ominous addition, "until such time as further order by common assent may be taken therein."¹ And, accordingly, Suffolk was soon to see the faggot lighted within her borders, and men and women to be ~~baptized~~ with fire. Mary, indeed, like her father, was of an unforgiving spirit: the memory of Cranmer's benefit had perished; and though, at length, he was absolved from the charge of treason, a boon which could scarcely be refused to him when it had been conceded to many others far more deeply implicated than himself, it was only that he might be put upon his trial for heresy; a commutation, which, however satisfactory to his feelings, was likely to be equally fatal to his life, a merciful substitution of the stake for the scaffold, and little more. For now the chief instruments of the Roman Catholic party were again in activity; and the sword was commanded to go through the land. Gardiner, again Bishop of Winchester, in the room of Poyntet, and now lord chancellor, and Bonner, Bishop of London, for Ridley was deposed, began once more to play their tragical parts; and whatever could be done by the most politic and the most blood-thirsty of men to put the Reformation down was unscrupulously adopted. Preachers were every where watched, in order that advan-

¹ Wilkins's Councils, iv. 86.

rage might be taken of any heretical doctrines which might escape them; and the bird of the air told the matter, and denounced them to the council, by whom they were silenced or imprisoned. Instructions, moreover, were sent to all the bishops, to deprive the married clergy of their benefices, and to suspend them from officiating in a church; an edict, by which, according to a computation of Archbishop Parker, three fourths of all the ministers in England, according to others, not more than one fourth, were ejected¹; whilst the principle of the measure confining its operation chiefly, though not entirely, to such as maintained the opinions of the Reformers, caused the pulpits throughout the country, at one swoop, to be again surrendered, in whole, or in great part, to a Roman Catholic priesthood. From the accession of Mary, which was in July, to the assembling of her first parliament in October, there had been an unequal struggle continued between the old and new forms of faith. It should seem that the feeling of London had from the first set in for the Reformation. A preacher at Paul's Cross², who had ventured to disparage Edward's memory, whilst making his court to Bonner, who was one of his hearers, excited an uproar amongst the people which nearly cost him his life. A queen's guard was afterwards in

¹ Burnet, ii. 276. Comp. iii. 162.

² The sketch of this celebrated pulpit given in the title-page is from a print in the library of Magdalen college, Cambridge; being one of the many curiosities collected by Pepys; for a sight of which I am indebted to the kindness of Mr. Lodge.

attendance to protect the pulpit; and an order was issued by the mayor, that the "ancients of all companies should be present, lest the preacher should be discouraged by his small auditory."¹ Still in the country the cause of the Pope was far the more popular; custom pleaded for it; its pageants were agreeable to the taste of the million; some hope, too, might be entertained of the recovery of the rights of pasturage, if the abbey lands were restored, and of the charities and hospitalities, which had ceased to flow since the suppression: then the disposition of the Queen was known before she positively proclaimed it by her policy; her own practice was enough to prove her future intentions; and such persons as were of a neutral character, a very large class in every country, went over to her side: above all, the Roman Catholic clergy, stimulated by the recollection of past wrongs (as they would naturally hold), and alive to the prospect of good things in store for them, put forth all their strength; so that the parliament now assembled made no scruple of reversing all the proceedings (save one) of the two former reigns, and Mary became at once supreme, and her church once more dominant. The single point to which the parliament, so compliant in points of doctrine, was resolutely opposed, was a proposal for a relinquishment of the abbey lands. This met with a vigorous resistance from their present possessors; and Cromwell's sagacity was now perceived when he bound over the leading families of every

¹ Fox, iii. 18.

county to keep the faith delivered to them, in securities of their newly-acquired estates. Mary, however, did not preach what she was not prepared to practise; for her sincere and disinterested devotion to the Roman Catholic persuasion was the virtue, the passion it might be rather said, of her life; the piety of her mother had imparted to her in her cradle a faith, which the subsequent sufferings of that mother must have halloed in her sight. She, therefore, with no selfish or secular purpose, restored of her own free will whatever abbey lands had been attached to the crown¹, as well as the first-fruits and tenths, a branch of papal revenue which Henry had indeed seized, but which never, it was suspected, passed beyond the hands of Pole, the sole commissioner for the disposal of it.² By Elizabeth, who succeeded to an exhausted exchequer, it was resumed; nor was it finally restored to the church, till Queen Anne, as we have said in a former chapter, generously appropriated it to ecclesiastical purposes; and accordingly it is now known under

¹ The new foundations to which this measure gave occasion were King's Langley in Hertfordshire, to which she annexed the nunnery of Dartford in Kent; the Greyfriars at Greenwich; the College of Manchester; St. Bartholomew's Priory in Smithfield; the House of the Knights Hospitallers of St. John of Jerusalem; the Savoy Hospital; Sion Nunnery; Westminster Abbey; Wolverhampton College in Staffordshire; and the Carthusian Priory of Sheen in Surrey — ten in all: they were for the most part re-annexed to the crown under Elizabeth. Ellis's *Letters of the Reign of Queen Mary*, vol. ii. 2d series. Strype's *Annals*, p. 68.

² Strype's *Annals*, p. 37.

the name of Queen Anne's Bounty, as a fund for the augmentation of small livings. There were those who reminded Mary that she was by this measure impairing the dignity of the crown; but to such she honestly made answer, that "she set more by the salvation of her soul than by ~~ten~~ kingdoms." Happy would it have been if her devotedness to the church in which she had been bred had shown itself in no less objectionable way than this. Prelates there were, of her own party too, who, had they been permitted to be keepers of such a conscience, would have guided it for good, for there was much in this sturdiness of purpose to be improved. Such a man was Tostall, perhaps such a man was Pole; but she had surrendered herself to cruel advisers; and soon became persuaded, that when she was putting honest men to death, or driving them into exile, she was doing God service. Accordingly, a proclamation was now issued for expelling all foreigners, many of whom had established themselves in England under the encouragement of Cranmer, and had contributed at once by their religious opinions and their scholarship to forward the Reformation, and by their skill in manufactures to develop the industry of the country. Together with these not fewer than eight hundred Englishmen, students chiefly, anticipating more unquiet times still, also withdrew; and betaking themselves to Frankfort, Strasburgh, Basle, Zurich, Geneva, and other places, there contracted a disaffection for the church of England, such as paved the way for the crisis which came with the civil wars. The Queen's marriage with Philip only

tended to confirm her prejudices. He was a bigot at heart, though sometimes of fair profession; and of a bigoted nation; and his unwelcome arrival in England was but a signal for riots among the people, and still greater severity on the part of the government. Joan of Kent and the Dutchman had been executed, probably under the law against Anabaptists, enacted in Henry VIII.'s reign, a sect politically dangerous¹, since they maintained community of goods, the duty of destroying the ungodly, and antinomianism in general. It was now, however, thought advisable to have a clearer warrant for the death of heretics, which was meditated upon a great scale; and the statutes against the Lollards; enacted under Richard II., Henry IV., and Henry V., were revived.² Gardiner has the infamous credit of the measure, though in its application he seems to have had some misgiving; and after convicting a few persons, and those the leaders of the Reformation, (he was even said to be bending his bow at the chief deer of all, the Lady Elizabeth,) he became weary of his work, and made over the service of blood to one who took his pastime in it like a leech—the brutal Bonner.³ Fuller, who has no love for the Bishop of Winchester in general, makes grateful mention of an act of mercy done by him to his own maternal great-grandmother, one Mrs. Clark, who having ministered to the wants of the bishop

¹ See Todd's *Life of Cranmer*, ii. 331.

² Fox, iii. 116.

³ Collier's *Eccl. Hist.* ii. 382.

when threatened with consumption and living in retirement for a while at Farnham Castle, at that time her residence, was allowed to abide in her heresy (for she held the reformed faith), with his connivance, and was even protected from the violence of others by his authority. It is pleasant to be able to produce any redeeming incident in these days of horror; for

“as the candle in the dark,
So shines a good deed in a naughty world.”

Isaac Walton exhorts his fisherman, when baiting with a frog, “to put his hook through the mouth and out at his gills, and then with a fine needle and silk to sew the upper part of his leg with only one stitch to the arming wire of the hook, and in so doing to use him as though he loved him.” And in the like compassionate spirit was it required “in the bowels of the Lord Jesus Christ,” of those whose office it was to burn men alive, “that the execution and punishment might be so moderated that the rigour thereof might not be too extreme¹,” besides which, it was the Queen’s particular desire that, both in London and elsewhere, there should be “good sermons” preached at the time of carrying the sentence into effect; so that whatever might be said of the act itself, there was nothing to offend the most fastidious philanthropy in the ceremonial.

For a history of that noble army of martyrs of whom it now becomes our business to speak, we are indebted to John Fox, himself an exile in

¹ Fox, ii. 125.

Mary's reign; and like most of those who then lived abroad, a friend of the Puritan principles at home. He had access to the archives and registers of the bishops; Grindal, who was himself a great collector of such materials, amongst others, supplying him with what he knew; and in many instances to the letters of the martyrs themselves¹; of all which documents, says Strype, he has been found, by those who have compared his books with his authorities, to have made a faithful use. He lived many years after his first edition was published, which was in 1563, and in the interval laboured to render it still more perfect; suppressing where he found reason to doubt, as in the story of Crammer's heart remaining unconsumed when the rest of his body was reduced to ashes²; enlarging where he was furnished with fresh matter which he thought trustworthy, as in the story of Gardiner's being stricken with sickness on the day of Crammer's martyrdom³; and taking journeys in order to

¹ Strype's Annals, pp. 239, 240, 241. Strype's Life of Grindal, pp. 11. 17. 22. fol., where will be found much information as to the manner in which Fox's book was composed.

² Compare p. 444. of the first ed. (very scarce) with subsequent editions.

³ This incident has been made the subject of much criticism to the disparagement of Fox: he, however, gives it as hearsay only; and, though the circumstantial details might not have been reported to him correctly, the substantial fact may be true nevertheless. Fox, too, was personally connected with the family of the Duke of Norfolk (at whose house the scene is said to have occurred), being once tutor in it. Strype's Annals, pp. 110. 368.

confront witnesses and sift evidence when his facts chanced to be called in question¹; such was his industry. But, independently of all knowledge of this, his pains-taking, the internal evidence of the book is enough to establish its general good faith. There is a simplicity in the narrative, particularly in many of its minute details, which is beyond all fiction; a homely pathos in the stories which art could not reach. Sometimes an expression casually drops out which suffices to prove the testimony to be that of an eye-witness; thus, where the terrible death of Ridley is described, the martyrologist speaks in general in his own person; yet we read, that "after the legs of the sufferer were consumed by reason of his struggling through the pain, he showed that side toward us clean, shirt and all untouched with flame," as though the informant (whose words the historian had here neglected to accommodate) had been himself the spectator. Sometimes there is a frank confession of ignorance, where a less scrupulous writer would have been under a great temptation to supply the defect of information by conjecture; thus, in the details of the same execution of Ridley and Latimer, it is observed, that after they rose from their knees the one talked with the other a little while, but what they said, adds Fox, "I can learn of no man." Above all, there is such candour in the developement even of his most favourite characters, their failings as well as their virtues so fairly told, that it is plain they

¹ Strype's Annals, p. 242.

have not been packed. Thus it is by him we are taught that Cranmer moved the King to the execution of Joan of Kent, though Cranmer's general disposition would seem repugnant to such an office, and though no mention is made in Edward's Journal of any such interference, or, indeed, of any reluctance on his own part which should render it needful: thus of Latimer, he does not conceal that he probably subscribed on one occasion certain articles which the bishops presented to him, of fear rather than of conscience¹; and of Hooper, his favourite, if he had one among the martyrs, that he disputed too pertinaciously, and to the breach of mutual charity, with his opponents on the subject of the episcopal habits, and that the prospect of their approaching death for the common cause, and nothing less, could effect the cordial union of the parties. Neither does he suppress any instance of kindness by which the sufferings of the martyrs were mitigated; and as St. Luke tells of the centurion entreating Paul courteously, so does Fox relate of Saunders, that when his wife came to the prison gate, with her young child in her arms, to visit her husband, the keeper, though he durst not suffer her to enter the prison, yet took the little babe out of her arms and brought him to his father, to his exceeding great joy: and of Hooper's guard, that they interceded with the sheriffs of Gloucester on behalf of their charge, that he might not be sent to the common gaol, they declaring at large how

¹ Fox, iii. 459.

quietly, mildly, and patiently he had behaved himself in the way, and adding, that they would rather themselves be at the pains to watch with him than that he should be so handled: and of Rowland Taylor, that his wife and son Thomas were permitted to sup with him in the Counter, "by the gentleness of his keepers;" and afterwards, that of his guard three out of the four used him friendly. It was to be expected that a work which, had it been published a few years sooner (supposing this possible), would probably have added its author to the catalogue of his own martyrs, should excite no small stir amongst the Catholics, and so it came to pass. But they weakened the force of their attack by betraying prematurely the spirit which animated them, sarcastically enquiring, even before its publication, when the "Golden Legend" was to appear, and denouncing the "Calendar of Saints," which they had heard was to be prefixed to it, as blasphemy against their own. But Fox went on, as he says, without fear and without favour; and no sooner was Elizabeth, to whom he dedicated, out of the way, than an examination of the book appeared, by Parsons the Jesuit, in his "Three Conversions of England," which has furnished more modern objectors with most of the weapons of their warfare. But Parsons writes in a temper which defeats itself. He deals in vague vituperation, rather than in specific accusations of error; or where he ventures upon the latter, he often either wilfully or ignorantly misreads Fox, as in the vapid pleasantries wasted upon Joan Lashford, a married maid, as

he is pleased to call her¹; or he triumphs over him by exposing some flaw in the character of a martyr with an *eureka*, which the honest martyrologist himself did not affect to conceal, and for the knowledge indeed of which Parsons is altogether indebted to him, as where he makes himself merry with the discordant sentiments of nine martyrs executed together, though their want of uniformity is a fact which he learns from Fox himself, who at the same time asserts that their disagreement was in smaller things only²; or he prefers charges against him at random without troubling himself to ascertain whether there is foundation for them or not, as where he accuses him of defacing or destroying the records of cathedrals, which he had been permitted to use, lest they should convict him of negligence or fraud; and this not upon investigation of the fact, but simply, "he presuming it," as though a charge so serious was to be an affair of presumption only³; or, lastly, he comments upon his author in so fiendish a temper of mind, as would be in itself enough to satisfy every calm and dispassionate judge that he spoke not of truth or a love for it, but of mere malice; as where, after debasing the circumstances of Rowland Taylor's story throughout, he concludes with a repetition of his joke about the worms in Hadley church-yard, as given in Fox, and subjoins, "this noteth Fox in the margin for a goodly apophthegm of Dr. Taylor, martyr; and

¹ Three Conversions, ii. 215.

² Id. 230.

³ Id. ii. 81., and Strype's Annals, p. 240.

with this, he saith, he went^o to the fire; *where we must leave him eternally, as I fear*¹;" and in a similar vein he has the heart to write of Latimer and Ridley, "they were burned together, each of them taking gunpowder to despatch himself quickly, as by Fox is seen, which yet is not read to have been practised by old martyrs, and it seemeth that these men would have the fame of martyrdom without the pain, and now they have incurred the everlasting pain, if by their end we may judge."² The man who could write thus can scarcely lay claim to our credence; for his prejudice has evidently stifled in him every sense by which a regard for truth can be guaranteed.

It is not thought out of place to introduce here this brief vindication of a book, which, so far as it is a contemporary history, has been, both of old, and of late, an object of unfair depreciation, but from which no right-hearted Protestant can rise, without being at once a sadder and a better man;—a book, out of which we shall now fearlessly draw our information, whilst we offer to our readers a few examples of those terrible sufferings which it is at once humiliating to think that man could inflict, and animating to think that man could so nobly bear.

The first called to take up his cross was John Rogers. He had been brought up in Cambridge, and afterwards became chaplain of the factory at Antwerp, where he fell into the company of

¹ Three Conversions, ii. 81., and Strype's Annals, p. 336.

² Id. iii. 29.

Tindall and Coverdale, and helped them to produce that translation of the Bible which goes by the name of Matthew's translation. He thence removed to Wittenberg, where he had the charge of a congregation for many years, till Edward's accession having rendered it safe for those who held his opinions to return to their native land, he repaired thither with his wife and children (for he was married), and was soon preferred by Ridley to a prebend of St. Paul's, and to the divinity lectureship in that cathedral. Thus was he in a situation to attract the attention of Mary, and to be smitten by her evil eye. Accordingly, he was soon brought before the council to answer for his doctrine; and having been first confined to his house, where he remained half a year, and from which he took no pains to escape, he was afterwards, by the tender mercies of Bonner, committed to Newgate, and lodged amongst the common desperadoes of a gaol for twelve months more. In his examinations before Gardiner and the council he played his part with the intrepidity of one who felt strong in the righteousness of his cause, and with a force of reasoning which it required the scoffs and brutal laughter of his judges to smother, for answer it they could not. Kneeling on his knees, he reminded them of their own acquiescence in the laws of Henry and Edward; one amongst them, and he, the chief, having been the open advocate of the King's supremacy as opposed to that of the Pope. He defended his own marriage, as being originally contracted in a country where marriage was permitted to priests; and said that neither did he

bring his wife into England till the laws of England permitted it too. With regard to service in an unknown tongue, and the doctrine of the mass, he stayed himself upon Scripture. Gardiner exclaiming against him, that "he could prove nothing by the Scripture, for ~~that~~ Scripture was dead, and must needs have a lively expositor." But all was in vain, for they were bent to have his life; and having been on several successive days brought before his judges, that some semblance of justice might not be wanting, he was at last condemned; and on the 4th of February, in the year 1555, being Monday, in the morning, he was warned suddenly by the keeper's wife of Newgate to prepare himself for the fire. He had been sound asleep; but being at length awakened, and bid to make haste, — "then," said he, "if it be so, I need not to tye my points;" and so was he had down to Bonner to be degraded, of whom he craved one petition, that he might talk a few words with his wife before his burning; but this poor consolation was denied him; and being led to Smithfield by the sheriffs, singing the Miserere as he went, his wife, and eleven children, one at the breast, meeting him by the way, his pardon still offered him at the stake, on condition of his recantation, he bore himself through this most cruel temptation of all with a stout heart, and bravely washing his hands in the flame as he was burning, gave up his spirit to God. Notwithstanding the care which had been taken to remove his writings, during his confinement in prison, he had contrived to evade the vigilance of his keepers; and

it was supposed, that when he wished to have a word with his wife before he was put to death, it was to tell her where they were secreted. If so, however, it proved needless ; for when she and her son afterwards visited his cell, and were on the point of going away, the latter chanced to cast his eye toward a dark corner under a pair of stairs, and there perceived a black packet of papers, which on examination turned out to be an account of his trial, written in his own hand, wherein was contained, as well many of the details already given, as a very touching prayer, begging of God to sustain him, and of others, in the like case, through their great need, and importuning all " to be good to his poor and most honest wife, being a poor stranger ; and all his little souls, hers and his children ; whom (he adds), with all the whole faithful and true catholic congregation of Christ, the Lord of life and death save, keep, and defend, in all the troubles and assaults of this vain world, and bring the last to everlasting salvation, the true and sure inheritance of all crossed Christians. Amen, Amen." So perished the poor champion of the reformed church ; and it has been observed, in reference to their leader, that of those who underwent the same fiery trial, married men, and the parents of many children, met their deaths the most courageously.

On the 9th of February, five days after Rogers, died the who had been with him in prison, and stood beside him at the same judgment-seat, — Hooper. He had escaped from the Six Acts in Henry's time, to the Continent, and returning

when Edward reigned in the room of his father, was promoted to the see of Gloucester. Of his scruples respecting the habits and oath mention has been made already; scruples, which his residence abroad had strengthened, and which his own uncompromising temperament made him slow to abandon. He would have found little difficulty in securing his safety by flight a second time, but having now put his hand fairly to the plough, having been the zealous preacher of the new doctrines, and a bishop under the new establishment, he felt, that to withdraw from the trial, severe as it was likely to prove, would be a dereliction of duty, and he determined to brave the danger, come what might. He ran the gauntlet of the inquisitional council, as Rogers had done before him, being tried by the same questions, and taunted by the same scoffs, only, it is remarkable, that Tonstall, Bishop of Durham, is said to have called him "beast," in consideration of his marriage; a reproach which, as it was scarcely consistent with Tonstall's general deportment to cast in his teeth, he being a good man, and a foe to persecution, scarcely allowing it to enter his own diocese, may be probably assigned to the humane motive, which Fuller suggests, that he wished to bark the more, in order that he might be at liberty to bite the less¹; and by affecting rudeness of speech, qualify himself for being merciful without suspicion. Hooper, however, was not to be saved. He was married:—he would not separate himself

¹ Fuller's Church History, b. viii. 20. See also, Fox, iii. 171.

from his wife; and he did not believe in the corporal presence in the sacrament; for these heresies he was deprived and condemned. It was necessary to remove him from the Clink, a prison not far from the church of St. Mary Overies, where sentence was passed upon him, to Newgate, one of the worst of the bad prisons of those times; and the precautions observed show the extreme unpopularity of these sanguinary measures, and the blindness of a government which could adopt them. He was kept till dark, and then led by a sheriff, attended by bills and weapons, through the city, the sergeants going forward to put out the candles of the costermongers, who in those days sat in the streets; the people, nevertheless, came in spite of these precautions to their doors with lights to salute him as he passed, and to strengthen his resolution by their cordial prayers. On the night after Rogers' martyrdom in Smithfield, he was informed by his keeper that he was himself shortly about to die; not in Smithfield, however, but at Gloucester, amongst the people over whom he had been pastor. At this he rejoiced greatly; and setting for his boots, spurs, and cloak, that he might be in readiness for the morrow, prepared himself to set out with his guard before break of day for the scene of his sufferings. There he arrived on the third evening after his departure from London, amidst the tears and salutations of a multitude of persons, who came out to meet him by the way. The evening before his execution he retired early to rest, and having slept one sleep soundly, passed the remainder of the night in prayer. The mor-

row was market-day—the country people flocked in; the boughs of an elm tree, near which the stake was fixed, were loaded with spectators; and over the college gate, which commanded a view of the spot, stood a company of priests. He had scarcely kneeled down to recommend his soul to God, for the last time on earth, when, by a refinement of cruelty common in those bloody days, a box was brought and laid before him on a stool, containing his pardon if he would still turn in the eleventh hour. But, he crying out again and again, “If you love my soul, away with it,” there remained, it was said, no remedy but to despatch him quickly. Then did he strip himself to the shirt; and a pound of gunpowder being placed between his legs, and another under either arm, he mounted upon a high bench, himself tall, and being bound to the stake by an iron hoop round his middle, he awaited his end. But the faggots were green, and kindled slowly; and the wind, which was high, drove the flame from him, so that he was scorched only, till dry wood was brought, but still in small quantities; and for a long while, nothing but the lower extremities was consumed; and he cried out in his protracted agony, “For God’s sake, good people, let me have more fire!” It was not till a third fire had been lighted that the gunpowder exploded: but neither did this end his sufferings; for he still continued to pray in a loud voice, “Lord Jesus, have mercy upon me!” At length his tongue became swollen so that he could not articulate; and one of his arms dropped off; and after he had thus lingered three quarters of an

hour, in all the bitterness of the bitterest of deaths, he bowed forwards and yielded up his life.

None of all the martyrs appear to have died so hardly as Hooper; none, perhaps, to have left a stronger impression upon the minds of their hearers; to which the austerity of his doctrines and severity of his death alike contributed. His scruples and his tenets seem to have been scattered far and wide over the dioceses of Gloucester and Bristol, to come again after many days; for when Cheney some years afterwards was appointed to these sees, he being, as was supposed, a Lutheran, and being certainly a lover of ceremonial, found it impossible to reconcile the sentiments of his clergy with his own; and, fretted by constant conflict, became desirous to resign a charge, of which, indeed, he was eventually deprived by the archbishop, and to return to a life of more privacy and peace.¹

But, of the many beautiful histories in which Fox abounds, none is more beautiful than that of Rowland Taylor, rector of Hadley. Though a mere country parson, (for he had quitted the household of Cranmer, to whom he was chaplain, in order to reside upon his benefice,) — possessed, however, of a high spirit and popular talents, — he seems to have taken a lead in his own county; and following in the wake of Bilney, who had preached in the same quarters, contributed to render Suffolk what we have already described it — the soil in which the Reformation took the kindest root. The collateral effect of his influence and

¹ Strype's Annals, p. 246.

example may be thought, perhaps, to be discovered in a circumstance which comes out quite incidentally in the annals of that period; that one Dr. Drakes, who was afterwards burnt at Smithfield, and one Yeomans at Norwich, had both, we find, been connected with Rowland Taylor; the former having been made deacon through his means¹, the latter having been his curate at Hadley.² We will not enter into all the details of this thrice-told tale of sorrow; — his pastoral faithfulness; — his successful teaching, so that his parish was remarkable for its knowledge of the Word of God; — his efforts to introduce to each other rich and poor, by taking with him in his visits to the latter some of the more wealthy cloth-makers, that they might become acquainted with their neighbours' wants, and thus be led to minister to their relief; — his bold defiance of the Catholic priest whom he found in possession of his church, surrounded by armed men, and saying mass; — his reply to John Hull, the old servant who accompanied him to London when he was summoned there before Gardiner, and who would fain have persuaded him to fly; — his frank and fearless carriage before his judges; — his mirth at the ludicrous apprehensions he inspired into Bonner's chaplain, who cautioned the bishop, when performing the ceremony of his degradation, not to strike him on the breast with his crosier staff, seeing that he would sure strike again; — his charge to his little boy,

¹ Fox, iii. 681.

² Strype's Cranmer, p. 274.

when he supped with him in prison before his removal to Hadley, not to forsake his mother when she waxed old, but to see that she lacked nothing; for which God would bless him, and give him long life on earth and prosperity; — his coming forth by night to set out upon his last journey; his wife, daughter, and an orphan foster-child watching all night in St. Botolph's church-porch, to catch a sight of him as he passed; — their cries when they heard his company approach, it being very dark; his touching farewell to them, and his wife's promise to meet him again at Hadley; — his taking his boy before him on the horse on which he rode, John Hull lifting him up in his arms; — his blessing the child, and delivering him again to John Hull, saying, "Farewell! John Hull, the faithfullest servant that man ever had;" — the pleasantries, partaking, indeed, of the homely simplicity of the times, with which he occasionally beguiled the way; — the joy he expressed at hearing that he was to pass through Hadley, and see yet once before he died the flock whom, God knew, he had most heartily loved and truly taught; — his encounter with the poor man who waited for him at the foot of the bridge with five small children, crying, "God help and succour thee! as thou hast many a time succoured me and mine;" — his enquiry, when he came to the last of the alms-houses, after the blind man and woman that dwelt there; and his throwing his glove through the window for them with what money in it he had left; — his calling one Soyce to him out of the crowd on Aldham Common, to pull off his

boots and take them for his labour, seeing that "he had long looked for them;" — his exclaiming last of all with a loud voice, as though the moral of his life was conveyed in those parting words, "Good people, I have taught you nothing but God's Holy Word, and those lessons that I have taken out of God's blessed book, the Holy Bible; and I am come hither this day to seal it with my blood;" — these, and other incidents of the same story, combine so many touches of tenderness with so much firmness of purpose, — so many domestic charities with so much heroism, — such cheerfulness with such disaster, that if there is any character calculated to call forth all the sympathies of our nature, it is that of Rowland Taylor. God's blessing is still generally seen on the third and fourth generation of them that love him; and if Rowland could have beheld the illustrious descendant which Providence was preparing for him in Jeremy Taylor, the antagonist of the Church of Rome, able after his own heart's content, — the first and best advocate of toleration, — the greatest promoter of practical piety that has ever, perhaps, lived amongst us, — he might have humbly imagined that God had not forgotten this his gracious dispensation in his own case; and had approved his martyrdom, by raising from his ashes a spirit more than worthy of his name.

The fate and fortunes of Cranmer, Ridley, and Latimer were so closely united that their history is a common one. Of Cranmer's rise and advancement mention has been made already. Ridley was well born, coming of a good stock in

Northumberland; his reputation was great in Cambridge, where he was first a student and then the Master of Pembroke College. Henry promoted him to the see of Rochester; and Edward translated him to that of London. He was a man of vast reading, ready memory, wise of counsel, deep of wit, and very politic in all his proceedings. Though abundantly kind to his kinsfolk, he declared, even to his brother and sister, that doing evil they should look for nothing at his hand; such was his integrity; and when the mother of Bonner was his near neighbour at Fulham, he gave her a welcome to his table (an attention which was afterwards but ill returned by her son), assigning to her a chair of her own; so that even when the king's council dined with him, he did not suffer her to be removed, saying, "By your Lordships' favour this place, by right of custom, is for my mother Bonner;" such was his tenderness. His life, which is probably a picture of that of the other ecclesiastics of his time, was conducted with great regularity. Every morning, as soon as he had put on his clothes, he prayed in his chamber for half an hour; thence to business or to study till ten; after which he assembled his household for family prayers; dinner came next, which, with chess, engaged him for an hour; when, if there were no suitors, or matters to be transacted abroad, he returned to his study till five; evening prayers followed, then supper and his favourite chess; again his books till eleven o'clock, and so his private devotions performed as in the morning, he ended his peaceful day.

Of the chapters which he selected for the instruction of his own people (of whom, says Fox, he was marvellous careful), the 13th chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, and the 101st Psalm, were the most often in his mouth. In his public character Ridley was, doubtless, one of the brightest lights of the Reformation, yet not such as to extinguish Cranmer¹; though some have so accounted him, contrary to his own modest testimony to the superior knowledge of the Archbishop, "who passed him," said he, "no less than the learned master the young scholar," and in spite of the numerous acknowledged productions of Cranmer; and the little we know of Ridley beyond his Examinations, Treatises, and Letters (all most able indeed), preserved in the pages of Fox.

Latimer was a man of more humble birth than the two former, being a small farmer's son at Thurcaston, in Leicestershire; a condition in life which qualified him, perhaps, so eminently for spreading the doctrines of the Reformation amongst the people, whose tastes and phraseology, as well as their failings and faults, he, of all the leading Reformers, seems to have best understood; and he was accordingly honoured by the title of the Apostle of England. Fastidious hearers would indeed find much to shock them in the homely speech and extravagant jokes of

¹ See, however, Fox, iii. 497.; where the Bishop of Gloucester is made to say, that Latimer learned of Cranmer, Cranmer of Ridley, and Ridley to the singularity of his own wit. But it was the policy of the Catholic party to run down Cranmer.

Latimer, though probably in this he did but follow an example which the friars had set him; but the earnest sincerity of the man overcame all obstacles, and recommended him to the court, as well as to the country, for an engine of the Reformation powerful beyond most others. The see of Worcester, to which he was elected by Henry, he took the first opportunity of resigning, an opportunity given him by the Act of the Six Articles; and when he might have resumed it he held back, living with Cranmer at Lambeth as a private individual, accessible to suitors, whose cases he forwarded to the primate; greeted by the people still with the title of Lord, for they rejoiced to pay him honour; and the favourite even of the boys in the streets, who cheered him as he approached his ever popular pulpit with some hearty word of encouragement to say on. Still there was something in Latimer (even in those times, when it was not much the practice of the preacher to go bridle in hand,) which seems to have stamped him as a humourist amongst his unrefined contemporaries; and a few words of advice which Cranmer gives him in a letter written when he was about to make his first essay as a preacher at court,—a situation to which the archbishop had himself introduced him,—indicate that he looked upon the experiment not without some little apprehension for the result. “Overpass or omit,” says the discreet adviser, “all manner of speech either apertly or suspiciously sounding against any *special* man’s facts, acts, manners, or sayings, to the intent your audience have none occasion

thereby, namely, to slander your adversaries, which would seem to many that you were void of charity, and so much the more unworthy to occupy that room. Nevertheless, if such occasion be given by the word of God, let none offence or suspicion be unreprehended, especially if it be *generally* spoken, without affection. Furthermore, I would that you should so study to comprehend your matter, that in *any* condition you stand no longer in the pulpit than an *hour or an hour and half* at the most; for by long expense of time, the King and the Queen (Anne Bullen) shall peradventure wax so weary at the beginning that they shall have small delight to continue throughout with you to the end."¹

Ridley and Latimer, like Cranmer, had favoured the usurpation of the Lady Jane; and, accordingly, were also sent to the Tower on the accession of Mary. The charge against them, however, was commuted (as we have seen was the case with the archbishop), and they were proceeded against as heretics. The Tower being full, — for the prisons were then the chambers of the prophets, — the three friends, together with Bradford, were thrust into the same room, where they read over the New Testament, and confirmed each other in the faith for which they were to die. Here they remained about six months, during which time disputations (such as they were) were held in the convocation on some of the controverted points; from which,

¹ Mr. Todd's Life of Cranmer, i. 140., where this letter is printed from the Lansdowne MSS.

however, the reformers in prison, who were the most learned of the body, were excluded ; whilst the few of that persuasion who were present, and who dared to advocate their principles, were clamoured down, till at length the Romanists, awakened to some sense of shame at the scandal of a victory which they won by confining or silencing their opponents, agreed to transfer the debate to Oxford ; there to be conducted by the ex-bishops on the one hand, and certain commissioners from both universities on the other ; and for Oxford, Cranmer, Ridley, and Latimer set out from the Tower, on the 8th of March, 1554. Here they were consigned to a prison called Bocardo, — a building which it is matter of regret it should have been needful to pull down not more than about sixty years ago ; and, on the 14th of April, they were brought out together to St. Mary's church, when the questions submitted to them were these : —

1. Whether the natural body of Christ was really in the sacrament ?

2. Whether any other substance did remain after the words of consecration, than the body of Christ ?

3. Whether in the mass there was a sacrifice and propitiation for the sins of quick and dead ?

The dispute was then fixed for Cranmer on the 16th, for Ridley on the 17th, and for Latimer on the 18th of the same month.

In the management of this famous argument, which was conducted by syllogism and in the schools, we have an excellent example of the ratiocinations of those days. Certainly, the Ro-

man Catholic doctors displayed no lack either of policy or acuteness ; but it was the policy of men aware of their weakness, and therefore slow to measure their strength ; and the acuteness of sophists whose object it was rather to perplex the adversary, than to unravel the truth ; it was one of those cowardly conflicts, “ ubi tu cædis, ego vapulo tantum ;” where one strikes, and the other must be content to be smitten, — the popish disputants putting objections to the reformers, but refusing to appoint a second meeting in which the reformers might retaliate, so Cranmer complains to the council, — where a single defendant is assailed by a multitude of discordant voices, lifted up against him together, — and where, at intervals, the partial prolocutor would translate into English, after a fashion of his own, for the benefit of the unlearned spectators, some passage in the dialogue which served as a signal for hisses, peals of laughter, and shouts of “ *Vicit veritas !*” to the extinction of all fair argument, and the confusion of all modest men. “ I have but one tongue,” cries Ridley ; “ I cannot answer at once to you all.” — “ O what unright dealing is this !” he again exclaims, on hearing the perverted quotations which he was not permitted to expose. Whilst poor Latimer, faint, and afraid to drink for vomiting, — making an appeal moreover to Weston, enough to touch a stone, — “ Good master, I pray be good to an old man : you may, if it please God, be once as old as I am ; you may come to this age and this debility,” — is subjected to clamour still more inhuman ; for he disputed in English, and was there-

fore better understood. "Although," says he, "I have spoken in my time before two kings more than once, two or three hours together without interruption, now (that I may speak the truth by your leave) I cannot be suffered to declare my mind before you; no, not by the space of a quarter of an hour, without snatches, revilings, checks, rebukes, taunts, such as I have not felt the like in such an audience all my life long."

The glory of this contest (as we find it detailed in Fox¹) certainly rests with Ridley, rather than with Cranmer, who had probably less nerve, or Latimer, who had less learning. He adheres to one line of argument — that of explaining all the authorities advanced against him of the *spiritual* presence only; and this he does with a knowledge of his subject, as well as a readiness in applying it, such as argue an extent of reading, a tenacity of memory, and a presence of mind, quite wonderful. Be they passages from Scripture, from fathers, or from the canons of councils, with which he is plied, they appear to be the last things which he had examined, so that a false reading, or a false gloss, or a packed quotation, never escapes him; and either a minute knowledge of an author's text, or (what is often quite as certain a proof of scholarship) an accurate

¹ Copies of this disputation were abroad in Ridley's life; for Grindal in a letter to him, dated Frankfort, the 6th of May, 1555, speaks of having seen such. — *Strype's Life of Grindal*, pp. 12. 18. "It seems that Cranmer and Ridley had committed all that they could remember to writing; and that Grindal had compared their account with that of the notaries, and found the two agreeing in the main."

perception of the general spirit which influences him, enables him to wrest the weapon from the hands of his adversaries, and to turn it against themselves. "If there was an Arian," exclaimed one of them, in the bitterness of defeat, "which had that subtle wit that you have, he might soon shift off the authority of the Scriptures and fathers." All, however, was to little purpose before judges who, like Virgil's Rhadamanthus, were bent upon punishing first and convicting afterwards. Sentence was passed in St. Mary's church, where Cranmer, Ridley, and Latimer were convened; in the course of it, they were asked by the commissioners whether they would turn or no; but they bade them "read on in the name of God, for that they were not minded to turn; and so were they condemned all three."

It was intended to act the same scene over again at Cambridge, where Hooper, Bradford, Taylor, Philpot, and some others, not yet put to death, were to be baited; but they had received timely information of the treatment of their companions at the sister university, and refused to dispute, except in writing, or before the Queen, or either house of parliament; and, accordingly, the tyrannous scheme was in this instance abortive.

But though condemnation of heresy was now passed upon these three leaders of the Reformation, the execution of the sentence was suspended, in the case of Ridley and Latimer, till the October of the year following, a period of eighteen months; and in the case of Cranmer, for five months longer still; the two former

being committed to the custody of private individuals, the latter still kept in Bocardo. The interval, however, was a busy one; the sentence was to be confirmed by the Queen in council; but the law itself was not determinate; and the old penal statutes (as we have said) were restored. Probably this measure would have been recommended by such advisers as Mary had about her, under any circumstances; but her marriage with Philip, which was now concluded, blew up the flames; and the bloody acts were passed and carried into effect, it was understood, with the greater severity, from a superstitious opinion entertained by the Queen, who now fancied herself pregnant, that her safe delivery could not be effected so long as a heretic was suffered to live. But, trying as must have been the suspense to these brave spirits in prison, it was not without its benefit to the cause for which they were content to suffer; for now it was that they had leisure to write those numerous letters of council, of encouragement, and of comfort (like St. Paul in his bonds), to the faithful brethren, both individuals and societies, which are said to have forwarded the Reformation beyond most other things: a fact at which none will be surprised who will peruse those which Fox has preserved to us; and above all, Ridley's Letter, entitled, "his last farewell to all his true and faithful friends in God," which has been ever esteemed one of the most pathetic pieces of writing contained in our language.

"As a man minding to take a far journey," says he, "and to depart from his familiar friends, com-

monly and naturally hath a desire to bid his friends farewell before his departure; so likewise now, I, looking daily when I should be called to depart hence from you, bid you all, my dear brethren and sisters in Christ, that dwell upon the earth, after such manner as I can, farewell.

“Farewell, my dear brother George Shippide, whom I have ever found faithful, trusty, and loving in all states and conditions, and now in the time of my cross, over all other to me most friendly and steadfast, and that which liked me best over all other things, in God’s cause ever hearty.

“Farewell, my dear sister Alice, his wife. I am glad to hear of thee, that thou dost take Christ’s cross, which is laid now (blessed be God!) both on thy back and mine, in good part. Thank thou God that hath given thee a godly and loving husband: see thou honour and obey him according to God’s law. Honour thy mother-in-law, his mother, and all those that pertain unto him, being ready to do them good, as it shall lie in thy power.

“Farewell, my dearly beloved brother John Ridley, of the Waltown, and you my gentle and loving sister Elizabeth; whom, besides the natural league of amity, your tender love, which you were said ever to bear towards me above the rest of your brethren, both bind me to love. My mind was to have acknowledged this your loving affection, and to have acquitted it with deeds, and not with words alone. Your daughter Elizabeth I bid farewell, whom I love for the meek and gentle spirit that God hath given her, which is a precious thing in the sight of God.

“Farewell, my beloved sister of Unthank,

with all your children, nephews, and nieces. Since the departing of my brother Hugh, my mind was to have been unto them instead of their father; but the Lord God must and will be their Father, if they would love and fear him, and live in the trade of his law."

He then goes on to take leave of other kindred more distantly related to him, and to declare the duty which compelled him to lay down his life. He next reviews and defends the acts of Edward's Reformation, to which he had been a party; laments that the wild boar should have rooted them all up; contrasts the present with the past; and returning once more to his sorrowful leave-taking, "To whom," says he, with feelings far more to be envied than those of Gibbon or Gray, "to whom, after my kinsfolk, should I offer farewell, before the University of Cambridge, where I have dwelt longer, found more faithful and hearty friends, received more benefits (the benefits of my natural parents only excepted), than ever I did in mine own native country wherein I was born?

"Farewell, therefore, Cambridge, my loving mother and tender nurse! If I should not acknowledge thy manifold benefits, yea, if I should not for thy benefits at least love thee again, truly I were to be counted too ungrateful and unkind. What benefits hadst thou ever, that thou usest to give and bestow upon thy best beloved children, that thou thoughtest too good for me?.... First to be scholar, then to be fellow, and after my departure from thee, thou calledst me again to a mastership of a right worshipful college. I

thank thee, my loving mother, for all this thy kindness ; and I pray God that his laws, and the sincere Gospel of Christ, may ever be truly taught and faithfully learned in thee.

“Farewell, Pembroke Hall, of late mine own college, my care and my charge ! What case thou art now in, God knoweth ; I know not well. Thou wast ever named since I knew thee, which is now thirty years ago, to be studious, well learned, and a great setter forth of Christ's Gospel, and of God's true word : so I found thee, and, blessed be God, so I left thee indeed. Woe is me for thee, mine own dear college, if ever thou suffer thyself by any means to be brought from that trade. In thy orchard (the walls, butts, and trees, if they could speak, would bear me witness) I learned without book almost all Paul's Epistles ; yea, and I ween all the Canonical Epistles, save only the Apocalypse. Of which study, although in time a great part did depart from me, yet the sweet smell thereof I trust I shall carry with me into heaven ; for the profit thereof I have felt in all my lifetime ever after ; I ween of late (whether they abide now or no, I cannot tell) there was that did the like. The Lord grant that this zeal and love toward that part of God's word, which is a key and true commentary to all the Holy Scripture, may ever abide in that college so long as the world shall endure !”

He then bids farewell to Herne, his parish in Kent, charging himself with being its debtor for the doctrine of the Lord's Supper ; God not having at that time revealed it to him.

Then he turns to London, lately his own see, the faithful city now become an harlot, and exhorts to repentance the lords of the land; reminding them, that if they had listened to him in times past, when he preached before the prince and parliament, much more should they now, when, being appointed to die, he could have no desire of worldly gain, and no other expectation but shortly to stand before the seat of his eternal Judge.

Long it was not, before his summons arrived. At the end of September came down the fatal commissioners from Cardinal Pole, legate and archbishop elect, authorised to accept the recantation of Ridley and Latimer, or else to confirm their sentence and pronounce their degradation. The latter office they were speedily called upon to discharge, for the future martyrs were not men to flinch from the flames; and so "were they committed to the secular powers," (for the words of these ecclesiastical death-warrants were smother than of "of them to receive due punishment according to the tenour of the temporal laws."

"The night before Ridley suffered, his beard was washed, and his legs; and as he sat at supper the same night at master Irishes (who was his keeper), he bade his hostess, and the rest at the bord, to his marriage: 'For,' saith he, 'to-morrow I must be married;' and so shewed himself to be as merry as ever he was at any time before; and wishing his sister at his marriage, he asked his brother, sitting at the table, whether she could find in her heart to be there or no: and he

answered, 'Yea, I dare say, with all her heart:' at which word he said he was glad to hear of her so much therein. So at this talk mistress Irish wept; but master Ridley comforted her, and said, 'O, mistress Irish, you love me not now, I see well enough; for in that you weep it doth appear you will not be at my marriage, neither are content therewith. Indeed, you be not so much my friend as I thought you had been: but quiet yourself; though my breakfast shall be somewhat sharp and painful, yet I am sure my supper shall be more pleasant and sweet.' When they arose from the table, his brother offered him to watch all night with him; but he said, 'No, no, that you shall not; for I mind, God willing, to go to bed, and to sleep as quietly to night as ever I did in my life.' So his brother departed, exhorting him to be of good cheer, and to take his cross quietly, for the reward was great."

The place appointed for the execution was the ditch on the north side of the town, over against Baliol College, and the Lord Williams was instructed by the Queen's letters to marshal the householders, and to see that no tumult was made. Then came out Ridley in his black furred gown and velvet cap, walking between the mayor and an alderman. As he passed Bocardo he looked up, hoping to see Cranmer, but he, says Fox, was then engaged in dispute with one Friar Soto; others, however, whom Heylyn and Burnet follow, assert that he beheld the whole sorrowful spectacle from the roof of his prison, and upon his knees begged God to

strengthen his companions in their agony, and to prepare him for his own. When Latimer came up, (for the poor old man made what speed he could, but by reason of his years was slow,) Ridley ran to him and kissed him, saying, "Be of good heart, brother; for God will either assuage the fury of the flame, or else strengthen us to abide it." Then they kneeled down both of them, and prayed very earnestly; and when they had risen and talked together awhile, Dr. Smith, one of those who had recanted in Edward's time, and was now, therefore, the more zealous, preached before them, having the feeling to choose for his text, "Though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing." After a while, being commanded to make ready, Ridley gave away his apparel, a new groat, some nutmegs, rases of ginger, a dial, and such other things as he had about him, the by-standers but too happy to get "any rag of him;" and Latimer, who had left it to his keeper to strip him, now stood in his shroud, no longer the withered and decrepit old man he seemed, but bolt upright, "as comely a father as one might lightly behold." Then did Ridley move the Lord Williams to intercede that the leases which he had made as Bishop of London might be confirmed; and when he had relieved his conscience of this his only worldly care, a kindled faggot was laid at his feet; Latimer, who was fastened to the same stake, exclaiming at the instant, in words that have become memorable, "Ye of good comfort, master Ridley, and play the man; we shall this day light

such a candle, by God's grace, in England, as I trust shall never be put out."

Latimer's sufferings were short: he received the flame as it were embracing it; and after he had stroked his face with his hands and bathed them a little in the fire, he soon died, as it appeared, without pain. Not so Ridley; the faggots were piled up about him so that there was no vent for the flame, which, burning underneath, consumed all his lower extremities, he piteously desiring of the people, for Christ's sake, to let the fire come unto him. His brother-in-law, who meant it in mercy, heaped upon him still more fuel, till nothing could be seen of him, only he was perceived to be leaping up and down under the faggots, often crying out, "I cannot burn:" at last one of the spectators, pulling off the wood from above, made a way for the flame to escape, towards which Ridley leaned himself as towards a welcome executioner, when the gunpowder with which he was furnished, exploded, and he fell down dead at Latimer's feet.

If it was not Gardiner's jealousy of Pole, who was to succeed Cranmer in the primacy, which was the occasion of the archbishop's respite¹, the plan of the persecution was arranged with consummate sagacity. Ridley and Latimer were men of greater animal courage than Cranmer; and would probably have sustained the insidious temptations under which he sunk, or at any rate would have imparted their own constancy to him,

¹ Burnet, ii. 315.

had they all suffered together. They, therefore, were taken, and he was left; for though the same legal form which served for the despatch of the two former would not have sufficed for the archbishop—it being reserved for the pope himself to take cognisance of a metropolitan—yet inasmuch as all the parties had been prisoners so long, ample time had been allowed for making the two processes run together, and thereby bringing the three bishops together to the stake. Cranmer, however, was assailed by a separate commission which issued from the pope, as the other issued from the legate; and since a part of the form consisted of a citation to appear at Rome within eighty days, the final sentence was suspended till that period should have expired. The citation itself was an affair of mere mockery, compliance with it being impossible, for Cranmer was still detained a close prisoner. The eighty days at an end, and he “having taken no care to appear at Rome” (as the papal instrument had the modesty to word it), the pope pronounces him guilty of heresy; and appoints Bonner Bishop of London, and Thirlby Bishop of Ely, commissioners to see the same executed. His degradation having been effected, attended by every aggravation of insult which the ruthless Bonner could devise, he was delivered over to the secular power, (the church, forsooth, shrinking from the office of shedding blood,) to be put to death. One attempt more, however, was yet to be made to shake the resolution of the martyr; and Cranmer became the guest of the Dean of Christ Church, and delicate fare was provided for

him; and he played at bowls; and walked at his pleasure; and wily men distilled their venom into his ear, that the King and Queen desired his conversion above all things; that the council bore him good will; that it was but a small thing to set his name to a few words on a little leaf of paper; that he was not so old but that many years yet remained of lusty age; that his notable learning, which might profit so many, should not be extinguished before its time; that if desire of life were nothing, yet that death is grievous, and especially such a death; till Cranmer, who had stoutly withstood the judgment-hall and prison-house, the scoffs and gibes of merciless men, and all the terrible artillery of persecution in its most angry shape, was not proof against these crafts and subtleties which the devil or man wrought against him, and so signed his recantation. "To conceal this fault," may we say as Fuller does on the subscription of Jewel, "had been partiality; to excuse it, flattery; to defend it, impiety; to insult over him, cruelty; to pity him, charity; to be wary of ourselves in any like occasion, Christian discretion." His enemies now had him in the toils; and, to add to his humiliation, a series of recantations is exacted of him, each rising above the other in its demands; some perhaps, of his own dictating; the longest and most abject, apparently, the wordy composition of Pole; and whilst these very instruments were in preparation, with a duplicity which is a fit consummation of the whole, secret orders were given by the Queen to Dr. Cole, provost of Eton College, to prepare the sermon; and it was not

till the day before his execution, or even, perhaps, the very morning of it, when Cole visited him in prison, and furnished him with fifteen crowns to give to the poor — a dole not unfrequent at funerals in those times — that the eyes of Cranmer were quite opened to the situation in which he stood, and he found himself, after all the delusive hopes which had been held out to him, within a few hours of a dreadful end. Better faith might have been kept with him, and still a thirst for his blood been gratified; for, had he been spared, Cranmer was not the man to have borne for any long time the upbraidings of his own conscience, and, like Bilney, he would have been soon driven to find relief from sufferings worse than death, by a voluntary surrender of himself to the flames: as it was, the wisdom of the serpent, for which the church of Rome was so famous, forsook his persecutors, and by drawing their bow once too much, they snapped it in their hands: — “*Qui nimis emungit elicit sanguinem.*” Cranmer was now brought to St. Mary’s church, preceded by the mayor and aldermen, and with a friar on either side, who alternately repeated certain Psalms as the procession advanced; and being placed on a stage over against the pulpit, he was there made to listen to Cole’s address. This ended, all the congregation joined with him in prayer, and “never,” says a spectator, “was there such a number so earnestly praying together; Cranmer himself an image of sorrow, the dolour of his heart bursting out at his eyes in plenty of tears,” but in other respects retaining “the quiet and grave behaviour which was natural to him.”

Being exhorted to make a public confession, that all suspicion of heresy might be removed from him, "I will do it," said the Archbishop, "and that with a good will;" whereupon he rose up and addressed to the people some words of exhortation, and then a summary of his faith. "And now," he continued, "I come to the great thing that so much troubleth my conscience, more than any thing that ever I did or said in my whole life:" then he revoked his former recantation: "and forasmuch," he added, "as my hand offended, writing contrary to my heart, my hand shall first be punished therefore; for may I come to the fire, it shall be first burned." So saying, he was soon plucked down from the platform on which he stood, and was led away to punishment. He did not tarry long at his prayers; but putting off his garments, all but his shirt, which reached to the ground, his feet bare, his head bald, so that not one hair could be seen upon it, his beard, long and thick, covering his face with marvellous gravity, he presented a spectacle to move the heart both of friend and foe; at once the martyr and the penitent. As soon as the fire began to burn, he stretched forth his right arm, and thrust his hand into the flame, as he had said, holding it there till it was consumed, and oftentimes repeating, "This unworthy right hand;" and as if ashamed of his former weakness, and resolved to atone for it now by an heroic contempt of pain, he took his death with singular courage, seeming to move no more than the stake to which he was bound.

From John Rogers, the first of the martyrs,

who suffered on the 4th of February, 1555, to the five who were burned at Canterbury on the 10th of November, 1558, and were the last, two hundred and twenty-seven persons according to some computations, two hundred and eighty-four according to others, and two hundred and eighty-eight according to a third authority, perished in the flames.¹ How many more might have been added to the number of victims, had Mary's life been spared, it is impossible to conjecture, but happily those days were shortened; and on the 17th of November she herself ended a reign of continued disaster; Calais, which had been in possession of the English since the battle of Crécy, and then reckoned the jewel of the crown, lost; and lost apparently because the government dared not call a parliament to provide means of defence, such was its unpopularity²; a heavy debt contracted, less for national objects than to minister to the wants of the Spaniards; an exchequer too much exhausted to right itself; the learned men in exile; the universities a prey to the same Spanish rapacity³; the kingdom at large corrupted by Spanish vices⁴, and by a return to the law of clerical celibacy⁵; capital offences greatly multiplied; fifty-two persons being executed at Oxford at

¹ Collier, ii. 397. Fox. Strype's Eccles. Mem. iii. 291.

² Burnet's Reform. iii. 263.

³ Id. iii. 275. Strype's Annals, p. 133.

⁴ Id.

⁵ Strype's Life of Parker, pp. 33, 34. Where^h here is given, in the Archbishop's own words, a succinct catalogue of the miseries of this reign.

one sessions¹; a pestilence depopulating the country to such a degree as to excite fears of a French invasion by reason of the nation's weakness; for the inhabitants of the villages ceased, might Elizabeth say on her accession; they ceased in Israel, until that I arose, that I arose a mother in Israel; so that at length it was discovered that the Roman Catholic cause, for which alone Mary had lived, and would have been content to die, had by her own measures or misfortunes been brought to nought; and above all, that the fires of Smithfield had shed upon it a baleful and disastrous light. Instead of any attempt being made to alter the succession, though the Queen of Scots was at hand as a candidate for the crown—of such pretensions, too, as would have been likely to secure her some support at another time—Elizabeth, Protestant as she was known to be, was advanced to the throne by acclamation; bonfires lit in the streets before Mary was cold; tables spread for merry-making in honour of her successor; costly pageants prepared for her as she traversed the city, the children crying out, God save Queen Elizabeth!² the moderate revolted from a religion which spake of peace, but had shed blood upon the earth like water; and all parties weary of a reign of terror under which every man's safety, to whatever party he belonged, was only upon sufferance.

¹ Bishop Jewel's *View of the Bull*, — towards the end.

CHAPTER XIII.

ELIZABETH. — HER ACCESSION. — HER CAUTION. —
 REFORMATION AGAIN TRIUMPHANT. — RETURN OF
 THE EXILES. — REPEAL. — INJUNCTIONS OF ELIZA-
 BETH COMPARED WITH THOSE OF EDWARD. —
 PROGRESS OF THE PURITANS. — THE REFORMATION
 NOT COMPLETED. — CONCLUSION.

SUCH was the great agony through which the Reformation was doomed to pass. But ~~that~~ which thou sowest is not quickened except it die, and so it proved in this instance. The reign of Mary was the grave of the cause for a short season, and that of Elizabeth was now to be its triumphant resurrection. It will not, however, be necessary to pursue our subject much further, which, from a History of the Reformation, would soon run into a History of Puritanism, the extreme to which it degenerated for a while. Into this question it is not our intention to enter. For the present, little remained to be done, but to repeal the several laws by which Mary had superseded the acts of Henry and Edward; and to resume the use of those services and rituals which the martyrs had provided, and of which the nature and number have been already told. But Elizabeth proceeded warily. Well as her religious sentiments were understood, none but the most attentive observer could have at first

detected them in her conduct. A figure of Truth greets her with a translation of the Bible in its hand; she takes the book and reverently kisses it. A court buffoon beseeches her to restore to freedom four prisoners long bound in fetters, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John; she answers that she must first endeavour to know the minds of the prisoners themselves. At her coronation in Westminster Abbey, she partakes of the mass¹; on Christmas-day, which was ~~was~~ about a month later, she demurs to hear it.² The Puritans make haste to pull down the images; she bids them hold their hand. Unlicensed preachers, be they of what denomination they may, Catholic or Protestant, she silences alike. The marriage of the clergy, much as the measure was desired by the leaders of the Reformation, she refuses, connives at, at last reluctantly concedes. She offends the zealots of both parties, for she openly espouses the cause of neither³; but she makes that party her own, which represents the sober, the stable, the somewhat phlegmatic good sense of the English people; a party without which no government, however brilliant, can be safe; and with which none, however unattractive, can be long in danger. Such policy was natural to herself;—“My sweet sister *Temperance*,” was the name by which her brother loved to call her; and, moreover, she had been nursed in the school of caution, and for years one word or deed of indis-

¹ Strype's Annals, p. 29.

² Ellis's Letters, Second Series, ii. 261.

³ Strype's Annals, p. 41.

cretion might have cost her her head. Such policy, too, was after the heart of Cecil, perhaps the sagest of her counsellors, who now taught his mistress to thread her way, as he had hitherto threaded his own, through most dangerous and difficult times, with the sagacity of a wizard. The outset of Elizabeth's reign, indeed, was perhaps the masterpiece of his tactics; and years afterwards, when the crisis was passed and the Reformation established, he appealed to that period, as well he might, in proof of his successful devotion to the cause of truth.¹ Still Elizabeth was working her way underground, and by measures which, whilst they did not provoke notice, would not fail to produce fruits. Thus, though she would not exclude Roman Catholics from her privy council, she would yoke them with such colleagues as were friendly to the Reformation, and were at the same time of talents so extraordinary as would readily obtain the mastery in debate. Though she would not weed out of the commission of the peace, Roman Catholic magistrates, she would regulate her new appointments with a view to serving the cause she had secretly at heart. She would not compel, or attempt to compel, a Roman Catholic parliament by force to make the laws she desired, but she would take care to influence the elections in such a manner as to secure the return of members who would do so. Her first object appears to have been to soothe the country; to maintain the authority of law, be it as yet what it might; to establish her own po-

¹ Strype's Annals, p. 82.

sition as monarch; and thus to possess herself of a basis on which she might proceed to build, at her leisure, the permanent prosperity of her realm.

Her parliament assembled; and never did a parliament meet under circumstances more imperative: to its wisdom it was left to order and settle all things upon the best and surest foundations; and accordingly it passed the two great acts by which the alliance between church and state was established, those of Supremacy and Uniformity; neither of them, indeed, now enacted for the first time, but both statutes of Henry or Edward, with certain amendments, revived.

Against the Act of Supremacy some objections were urged in the parliament, and some scruples out of it; both, no doubt, proceeding from the same quarter. It was a scandal to place a woman at the head of the church, whose voice was not to be heard in it; yet the principle (it was argued) was acknowledged in a degree by the Catholics themselves, who had no difficulty in recognising the authority of an abbess, though of a nature in many respects much more strictly ecclesiastical, than that with which it was proposed to invest the queen.¹ Neither was there any disposition in her Majesty to challenge an authority to minister in the church (as was maliciously given out), or, indeed, any other authority than such as had been enjoyed by her father and brother of famous memory.² By the

¹ Heylyn, p. 209. fol.

² Sparrow's Collection, p. 82.

Act of Uniformity, the exclusive use of the Book of Common Prayer in the public services was enjoined under pain of imprisonment, and eventually of deprivation; whilst a respect for it was further exacted by penalties against those who should teach or preach to the disparagement of the same; and (what was a measure of more questionable expediency, as well as right) against those who should refuse to resort to their parish churches to hear it.¹ Meanwhile, it should be added, some few alterations had been made in the liturgy, dictated by a wish not to give needless offence to the Roman Catholics, but to win them, if possible, still to remain in a church which ever professed to be the restoration rather than the rival of their own. In the end, all the parochial clergy, with the exception of eighty individuals, took the oath of supremacy, and conformed.² Not so the bishops: they all, save one, were recusants, as were also many deans, heads of colleges, and prebendaries, and were consequently deprived. It is unfair to attribute an act apparently conscientious to an unworthy motive; but it was suspected that a recusancy so general amongst one order of ecclesiastics, and that the highest, was preconcerted, more especially as many or all of them had subscribed to the supremacy of Henry and Edward; and that it was not wholly independent of the notion that the Queen would find it difficult, in the actual condition of the church, to fill up their places to her satis-

¹ Sparrow's Collection, p. 112.

² Strype's Annals, p. 73.

faction, and would descend to a compromise.¹ The difficulty, too, whatever it was, was augmented, it might be thought, by the numerous vacancies which the sickness recently prevailing in the country had created amongst the upper ranks of the clergy. If such, however, were the speculations, they were fallacious. That great company of preachers was overlooked, who had been living in exile, and were now eager to return; — persons but ill qualified, by their long habits of necessary frugality and retirement, to succeed to the purple of their episcopal predecessors², and not having that in their looks which men would willingly call master, yet scholars ripe and good, Christians, moreover, sobered by adversity, and in many instances found to possess, under a mean aspect, perhaps, a genius that was vast. Out of these were drafted many recruits; Jewel, the Coryphæus of them all, a man, indeed, of matchless learning, which he nevertheless wields, ponderous as it is, like a plaything; of a most polished wit; a style, whether Latin or English, the most pure and expressive, such as argues a precision in the character of his ideas, and a lucid order in the arrangement of them, quite his own. His “Apology,” and his “Defence” of it, were the crowning works of the Reformation, and may be regarded, on the whole, as those in which its doctrines are put upon record by one the best qualified of all men to assert them with authority,

¹ Strype's *Annals*, pp. 106. 147. 150.

² *Id.* p. 237.

both from his intimate knowledge of the subject, the personal intercourse he had enjoyed with its chief promoters, and the favourable moment at which he wrote. But whilst some of these exiles were thus the pillars of their church, others were the reeds. Such were Cartwright, appointed to the Margaret professorship in Cambridge, and Sampson, to the deanery of Christchurch. What could come of these ministers, or of others like to these, but a plentiful harvest of non-conformity in the generation of students brought within the influence of their example and teaching; destined themselves to impart it in their turn to the several parishes throughout England in which their lots might happen to be cast? Here, then, was a schism, violent enough to endanger even a long-established church, much more one so recently settled as our own. But besides the Sampsons and Cartwrights, extravagant schismatics, there was another and a larger class behind, good men indeed, but, perhaps, too gentle for the times, the class of lukewarm churchmen, who still strengthened the hands and ministered to the purposes (however unwittingly) of spirits more determined than themselves.¹ Such was Pilkington, bishop of Durham², and even Grindal, bishop of London³, both Marian exiles, and neither of them very cordial fellow-workers with Parker, himself not an exile. For here was the origin of these

¹ Strype's *Annals*, p. 88.

² Strype's *Parke*, p. 155.

³ Strype's *Grindal*, p. 28. et alibi.

religious distinctions: the former leaning to the puritan; — Grindal himself being the Algrind of Spenser, whose praises of him bespeak the party with which he was identified¹; — the latter leaning to the Roman Catholic. Nor did the division expire with this generation; Abbot and Laud still presenting the same contrast in the next, when the church was upon the eve of that dissolution which was the issue of the whole. Still, the puritan principle, violently as it worked, subversive as it was of much that was innocent and much that was holy, had this to redeem it, that it purged out of the kingdom, effectually and for ever, the popery (we can use no other word to express our meaning) which lingered in its veins, and which, without the application of a strong antidote, might once more have penetrated to its vitals. For the spirit of popery, properly so called, always active, and now the more so from the ill-disguised claims of the Queen of Scots to the throne of England, had been recently recruited, it must be remembered, by the institution of the order of Jesuits, which, springing up in the age of the Reformation, aimed at directing the general movement, both in religion and politics, to the advantage of the Bishop of Rome, whose devoted servants they professed themselves. The rules, the activity, and the learning of this society rendered them formidable to any Protestant state, and added not a little to the perplexities of Elizabeth's position, who, whilst she feared the levelling and anti-monarchical

¹ Spenser, Eclogue vii.

principles of the Puritans, otherwise her natural allies against these champions of the Pope, was in still greater jeopardy from a hostile order, universal in its influence, secret in its operations, sagacious as herself in its councils; and if at length her government proved that it bore not the sword in vain, but smote with somewhat of a ruthless hand, it was rather in self-defence against political agitators that it so acted, than in violation of the rights of conscience. For certainly the severity did not begin till after her subjects had been absolved from their allegiance by a Pope's bull¹; neither did it ever manifest itself against woman or child: a distinction this, between the punishments of Elizabeth and the persecutions of Mary, sufficient in itself to point out that it was the disloyalty, and not the creed, of the parties that drew upon them the vengeance of the Queen; and to confirm the assertion of Cecil in his "execution of justice," that no one was put to death by Elizabeth for his religion only, as well as a similar vindication of her policy advanced with much detail in a letter of Walsingham's,—a policy which, he contends, was ever regulated by two rules, to deal tenderly with consciences, but not to suffer causes of conscience to grow to be matters of faction."³

The two important statutes of which we have

¹ The nature and political effects of this famous bull, issued by Pius V. in 1563, may be seen in Bishop Jewel's "view of it."

² See Hallam's Constitutional History, i. 223.

³ See the letter in Burnet, ii. 311.

spoken were followed up in the same year by injunctions of the Queen, after the manner of those of her brother. They are expressed, indeed, so far as the case admits, in the very same words as those of Edward twelve years before. Wherever, therefore, a change is introduced, there must have been a reason for it; and an index is thus obtained of the progress of opinion, the more satisfactory because quite incidental.¹ Thus, on a comparison of the two sets, it will be found, that the Roman catholic religion is treated with less courtesy by Edward than by Elizabeth. In the injunctions of the former we read "of kissing and *licking* of images:" in those of the latter the offensive expression is expunged. So, again, in the first, the power of the Pope is said to be justly "rejected, *extirpated*, and taken away *utterly*:" in the others, it is thought enough to declare that it is "justly rejected and taken away." These denounce the abuses of the Sabbath, — "a day on which God is more *offended* than pleased, more dishonoured than *honoured*, because of idleness, pride, drunkenness, quarrelling, brawling, which are most used on such days; the people, nevertheless, persuading themselves sufficiently to honour God on that day, if they hear mass and service;" and then is suggested a more excellent way of keeping the Sabbath holy: in those of Elizabeth the wholesome suggestion is retained, but the sabbatical picture is suppressed. It may be questioned, however, whether

¹ See these injunctions in Bishop Sparrow's Collection, p. 1. and p. 67.

this omission was made altogether in deference to the feelings of the Roman Catholics : perhaps the progress of puritanism had already begun to correct such gross disorders ; for it must be admitted, we apprehend, that the more decent and devout observance of Sunday, for which England is still remarkable, not only above catholic, but even above other reformed countries, is to be greatly ascribed to this all-powerful principle ; its stern decrees still felt to impart to the character of that day a sobriety, though no longer a gloom. For, pursuing the same comparison, we shall find other symptoms of the puritan being now in the ascendant. Thus, according to Edward's commands, images, shrines, pictures, and the like are to be destroyed, nor any memory of the same to be left in walls and glass windows. Elizabeth, however, adds, that " the walls and glass-windows shall be nevertheless preserved," as though the crusade against all ecclesiastical ornaments had already begun. Again, by Edward's injunctions, unlicensed preachers are not to be admitted into a pulpit. Those of Elizabeth, however, go farther, not allowing even licensed preachers to officiate out of their own parishes, unless they have a special license for this, as though itinerancy had commenced. Then, in the latter, we find certain supplementary clauses not in the injunctions of Edward, all pointing to the same conclusion. One against the growth of heresies, contrary to the faith of Christ and his Holy Spirit ; still a foretaste of the speculative imaginations of the next century. Another against disturbing the congregation in

the time of sermon; a practice¹ afterwards so common, and of which Bishop Bull's debate with the brawling Quaker is a characteristic instance.¹ A third, for the better regulation of singing in churches; not, indeed, absolutely forbidding the use of music, but reducing it to much greater simplicity; a concession, as far as it went, to the same party, who would willingly have ejected all organs, and allowed no psalmody whatever, but such as was strictly congregational.² Meanwhile, the secret of this growing strength of the puritan cause is discovered in other allusions, contained in the same injunctions, to the penury of the church, and the ignorance of its ministers; the natural effect of the late pillage and misapplication of its revenues: for here we encounter, not without some feelings of humiliation, such provisions as these (*ex pede Hercules*): — that no priest shall marry without permission given by the bishop and two justices of the peace living next to the place where the woman hath made her most abode before marriage, nor without the good will of her parents or next kinsfolk; or, for lack of such, of “*her master or mistress where she liveth.*” And again, that “such as are but *mean readers* shall peruse over before once or twice the chapters and homilies, to the intent they may read to the better understanding of the people, and the more encouragement of godliness.” This is a glimpse of a sad picture; but it is such as the sketch given in a former chapter³ of the con-

¹ Nelson's *Life of Bull*, p. 25. Oxf.

² *Strype's Annals*, p. 298.

³ Chap. VIII.

dition of the clergy under King Edward must have prepared us to expect. The Reformation was still too recent an event, and had been effected by means too violent, for the great good that was in it to have developed itself. The fountain had been thoroughly troubled, and time was wanting for it to defecate, as well as an infusion, perhaps, of some fresh elements that should expedite the process of precipitation. These Cranmer would have supplied, had he been allowed to complete his own idea. But his untimely death, and the selfish passions of men too strong for him, thwarting him whilst he lived, scanted the Reformation of much that should have belonged to it, and consigned it to posterity a noble but still an unfinished work;—a work in which there is every thing to admire, and yet something to desiderate.

Thus it has been said that the Reformation left the church without *discipline*; a defect which our communion-service confesses and laments: but it was one from which the Roman catholic church itself was not exempt; for the rivalry which existed between the secular and regular clergy, and again between the several orders of the latter, was, as we have seen, fatal to discipline. Still, whatever the defect was, it was not the fault of the reformers that it was suffered to remain. The canon laws were, indeed, no longer strictly applicable to the church, constructed as it now was; but an attempt was made to accommodate them, or to substitute for them such as were thought better. A code, which he called *Reformatio Legum Ecclesiasticarum*, was drawn up by Cranmer,

consisting of fifty-one titles, with an appendix, after the manner of the Digest of Justinian. It underwent many revisions in private during the reigns of Henry and Edward, but was not produced. It was revived, with a view to its legal enactment, by the Puritans in the lower house of parliament under Elizabeth; but the Queen thought it trenched upon her supremacy, and would not hear of it. It was reprinted, and no more, under Charles I., and was suggested once again to public notice by Bishop Burnet.¹ All, however, would not do; it fell to the ground; whether originally from the mere accident of the deaths of Henry and Edward before it was fully matured; whether from the difficulty of maintaining penal statutes in general in a church founded upon the principles of the Reformation; or whether, as some have thought, from the extreme severity of the code itself. That the latter circumstance was the cause of its non-enactment it is difficult to believe; for, severe as it may seem to us, and as it undoubtedly is, the distinction which is made in it between the essential and unessential doctrines of Christianity, and the exclusive application of the capital laws against heresy to the former, was the first instance of any such discrimination being exercised², and may be fairly considered as a step in the progress of the principles of toleration, — as the mitigation rather than the approval of penal excesses; for so little was

¹ Hist. of his own Times, — conclusion.

² See Mr James Mackintosh's History of England, ii. 272., and for the fact of the distinction (which has been disputed), Mr. Todd's Life of Cranmer, ii. 334.

that age prepared^u to revolt at the provisions laid down in it, that Bishop Jewel, who must have ranked rather with the liberal than the dogmatical party of his own day ; who had lived in exile at Frankfort, a liberal school, — himself, therefore, a victim of persecution ; and who wrote many years after Crammer ; seems to approve the same theory of punishment, and perhaps the same scale of it ; for whilst he vindicates freedom of opinion up to a certain point, still such as “ have a *wicked* opinion either of God the Father, or of Christ, or of the Holy Ghost, or of any other point of Christian religion, they being confuted by the Gospel of Christ, he would plainly pronounce detestable and damned persons, and would defy them even unto the devil ; neither would he leave them so, but would also severely and straitly hold them in by *lawful and politic punishments*, if they fortune to break out any where, and bewray themselves.”¹ These are very strong words. And what is more remarkable still, a similar line was adopted, nearly a hundred years later, by one who has been considered the great champion of religious liberty, and in a work expressly dedicated to the extension of it ; and though it is more than probable that Jeremy Taylor, here, as elsewhere, would not have had the courage to follow out his own argument to its practical results, and would have shrunk from “ putting to death or dismembering ” the professing Christian, even for “ impiety or blasphemy,” or for opinions (if only such), however “ destructive of the foundation

¹ Jewel's Apology, part iii. ch. i. sect. 3.

of religion : yet the theory itself, re-asserted after so long an interval, and by such an advocate, is enough to prove that Cranmer was rather in advance of his generation than behind it ; and that he is still to be regarded as the reformer, and not as the bigot.

But there is reason to think that the capital practices even of his code would have been mitigated, had he ever actually presented it to the legislature. Cranmer was becoming daily more tolerant, as he gradually fell under the influence of a more charitable faith. He had been shocked, it is said, by the solemn manner in which Edward made him responsible before God for the life of Joan of Kent ; he expressed himself shortly afterwards to Gardiner in terms significant of a repugnance to severities² ; and he was one of those who advised connivance at the use of the mass by the Princess Mary. With these tokens of temper before us, it seems fair to infer, that however greatly Cranmer coveted the establishment of discipline, he would scarcely have bought it at the price of blood ; and that his own character, by nature one of the most gentle, was asserting itself more and more even in matters calculated to put it most of all to the proof. But if discipline, properly so called, be lacking, so much the rather should those ecclesiastical regulations which are of imperfect obligation perhaps (and there are many such) be

¹ See *The Liberty of Prophesying*, sect. xiii. No. i. p. 190. ; *Id* sect. xv. No. iii. p. 212. 4to.

² *Cranmer's Answer to Gardiner*, p. 265. ed. 1580. quoted by Mr. Todd, ii. 152.

diligently observed by the clergy, both towards those set over them, and towards those committed to their charge ; the respect or neglect of which is just that which constitutes the decency or disorder of a church, — a distinction not easy to describe in detail, yet sufficiently intelligible in itself ; nor is it unreasonable to expect that the laity on their part should see the advantage of such rules, which cannot be onerous, and cordially co-operate with the clergy to the maintenance of them.

Another particular in which the Reformation was left incomplete, was in a provision for the sufficient education of the people. The demand, indeed, for education had not hitherto been great : few boys but such as were intended for ecclesiastics were made scholars ; so that even Latimer reckons the sons of great laymen or esquires, as he calls them, interlopers in the universities.¹ The churchman, and no other, was the clerk ; and the convent was in general the academy ; it was so, at least, in a *hundred* instances, if we understand an expression used by the speaker of the lower house, in the fourth year of Elizabeth, aright ; who, in his address to the Queen, laments the loss of such a number of places of education.² Schools, therefore, in the present sense of the word, there were few ; not more than three, we believe, in all London. And when Dean Colet founded that of St. Paul's on the eve of the Reformation, it was a thing regarded with some

¹ Serm. i. pp. 160. 183.

² Strype's Annals, p. 256.

jealousy.¹ Hence it probably was, that the numbers sent to Oxford and Cambridge (the two great national schools, as they were then considered) were so extraordinary,—thousands where there are now hundreds,—and that the age of the students was so tender. For on the rapid multiplication of foundation schools throughout the country in the century after the Reformation, the character of the universities, we shall find, became changed; the number of students diminishing, in spite of an increasing population, and the age at which they entered greatly advanced. Milton's is said to be the last instance of corporal punishment in either university;—a tradition which, whether true or false as to the individual, may serve to date the period of the transition from the past to the present system of academical education. But of the few schools that existed before the Reformation, some were seized and sold by the rapacious courtiers, particularly under the feeble reign of Edward; here was one channel of education cut off:—the convents were destroyed; here was another:—the universities were decayed; here was a third:—they were decayed, because the yeomen who might have been able to send their children to a school in the neighbourhood, if there had been one, were quite unable, from a disastrous change in their circumstances, to send them, as they often had done heretofore, to Oxford and Cambridge: an education so remote, frugal as the

¹ Knight's *Life of Colet*, p. 100.

² *Lanham's Sermon*, i. p. 94. *Strype's Cranmer*, p. 89.

times then were, being comparatively costly, and such as rendered even the ten groats which Jewel bestowed upon Hooker, when he called upon the good bishop on his way to his college on foot, not unwelcome. They were still further decayed from the same cause as the schools; powerful individuals intercepted and appropriated their revenues — accordingly very many students were actually unable to stay “for lack of exhibition and help.” — others did indeed stay, but in extreme penury. They rose in the morning between four and five o’clock; at ten they dined, having “a peny piece of beef amongst four, a few potage made of the broth of the same, with salt and oat-meal, and nothing else:” — at five in the evening they had a supper not much better than the dinner; and, before they went to bed, which was at nine or ten, being without fire, “they were fain to walk or run up and down half an hour to get a heat on their feet.” Such was the condition of what students there were in Cambridge in the days of Edward the Fifth.¹ Now this declension in the means of national instruction was the more calamitous, because it happened at a moment when the thirst for knowledge was becoming intense, and when it was more than commonly desirable that it should be slaked from cisterns of wholesome waters. Of this our reformers were aware; but again they were baffled, both they and their

¹ These facts are gathered from a sermon at Paul’s Cross, in 1550, by one Thomas Lever, afterwards master of St. John’s College, Cambridge. A copy of this sermon, and of another by the same author, is in the library of St. John’s.

king. The larger benefices were, indeed, charged with the support of one scholar at the university for every hundred pounds of their annual value: but this was a very limited provision for the wants of the times.¹ The chantry lands would have furnished a considerable, perhaps a sufficient, fund for the purpose, and Edward did so apply them in part, and would gladly have done so more extensively; but they were devoured by the nobles, and the moment for royal endowments went by. Happy would it have been, had it been otherwise. Such grammar schools as he would have planted over England would have been found "seminaries of sound learning," and (what was the first consideration of the founder) "of *religious* education." They might have raised up a more literate clergy. They might have checked, perhaps, the rising extravagances of the Puritans. They might have sustained the church by the direction they would have given to public opinion; and dispersed the storm which already threatened, by conducting, quietly and not unfruitfully, to the earth, the fierce elements with which the political and religious atmosphere was already so heavily charged. For they would have been the natural feeders of the church of England; the visitor, probably one of its prelates; the teachers, its more learned ministers; the prayers, those of its services; the catechism, its manual of doctrines,—that

¹ See Sparrow's Collection, pp. 6. 71. In K. Edward's injunctions it is a "competent exhibition;" in Q. Elizabeth's the sum is specified. 3*l.* 6*s.* 8*d.*

which Dean 'Nowell composed in Latin, and which was afterwards translated into Greek by Dr. Whitaker, his nephew, for the express use of such schools, having been approved in convocation, and been acknowledged to speak the authorised language of the reformers. A few such schools King Edward did establish, as we have said; but in numbers quite inadequate to the demands of the nation, which must have been abandoned to gross ignorance, and to the delusions of every theological empiric (which was in a great degree the case after all), but for the many private foundations, still however very insufficient, by which the reign of Elizabeth, who incorporated them, was distinguished. For these, the country was indebted to the generous efforts not of ecclesiastics only, but also of opulent yeomen and tradesmen, the last of whom, having made an ample fortune, generally in London, the first-fruits of the commerce of England, often retired to spend it in the place which had given them birth, and of which they piously endeavoured to relieve the intellectual and religious wants by erecting a school, connecting it with the universities by scholarships, and with the church by the qualifications of its masters. In these institutions, whether of royal or private foundation, most of our yeomen, shopkeepers, and small householders who resided within reach of them, besides many of a higher rank, were heretofore educated; a class of persons which both the recollection of living men, and still more the records of our domestic history, lead us to think not less sound in knowledge, nor less sage and sober in

sentiments, not less loyal subjects or less virtuous citizens, than the more enlightened generation, as it has been called, which has succeeded them, the sons of our commercial schools. Whilst by means of those same institutions a way has been commonly opened to youths of promise, though it may be of humble parentage, into the two great seats of learning, of which they have often become the brightest ornaments; and into the church, of which they have no less frequently proved themselves the most conspicuous and valuable ministers. Perhaps it might be added, that in either capacity, whether as nurseries of our laymen or of our clergy, such schools, productive as they have been of men duly qualified to serve God and their country, would have been far more so, had the principles upon which they were first founded been more rigorously observed in times past (for the error has been discovered, and some pains are now taken to remove it); had religion in general, its evidences and substance, entered still more largely into their regular studies; and that particular form of it established in this kingdom been made a theme of their more habitual instruction and parental concern.

Another defect imputed to the Reformation is the inadequate support it provided for the lower orders of the clergy. Four thousand livings, and upwards, of less than one hundred and fifty pounds a year each, many very far less, with no parsonage houses whatever, or with such as the most Sabine economist would pronounce unfit for a clergyman to occupy;—this is the forlorn condition, as to temporals, in which the church has

stood for a long season; a condition to which it could not have been reduced, had even a portion of the vast revenues dispersed at the Reformation been husbanded, and applied to the legitimate purpose of bettering the situation of the inferior clergy. This, Cranmer most earnestly desired; but his entreaties and regrets were alike unavailing. The evil continued, and Jewel took up the subject in his turn; and pressed the redress of it upon Elizabeth and her nobles, in his sermons at Paul's Cross (very curious pictures of the times); but the spoil was then divided, and restitution was looked for in vain.¹ Laud made another effort; one of whose projects it was to move Charles for a grant to buy in impropriations, two of which he hoped thus to redeem every year: but his chance of success best appears from the very intention (of which the record was found in his diary) being made matter of charge against him at his trial. Had the exertions of these prelates been effective, the very great, but, as things at present stand, the necessary evil of pluralities and non-residence would have been prevented, or left without cause or excuse. As it is, to proscribe the pluralist altogether, would, in many cases, be to visit with utter poverty the meritorious labourer in the vineyard, him and his little ones; and to insist, in all cases, upon residence, would be, in some, to say that the village handicraftsman more lettered than his fellows, should be again the officiating minister, as he once was in Edward's days, and as he was forbidden to be, from

¹ See particularly his Sermon on Psalm lxxix. 9.

the mischief it occasioned, under Elizabeth. The evil of which we speak is grievous; but it has been and is decreasing. By help of Queen Anne's bounty, of which the origin and history has been briefly told already, a sum of money advanced for the augmentation of a small living is met with an equal sum, when the whole is invested in land, so soon as land can be found; and thus is the income of the poor incumbent improved. And, by a modern and excellent act of the legislature, empowering him to mortgage his benefice to the amount of two years' income, and to bind his successors as well as himself for the gradual liquidation of the debt, he is enabled to build a new house, or make an old one habitable; and thus is his residence encouraged. The beneficial operation of these two instruments of gradual church reform is more and more manifest every day. By virtue of them the modest but not mean parsonage is beginning to appear in many rude and secluded hamlets where before there had been none; and the advantages of a pastor on the spot, frugal, indeed, of necessity, but carrying with him the respect which superior intelligence commands, and the sympathies of those amongst whom he walks not unseen; whose adviser he is in difficulties, and peace-maker in disputes; whose houses he visits in sickness and sorrow, and whose children he teaches the way in which they should go;—these charities, the attendants upon a resident ministry, are diffusing themselves over districts where they were once unfelt, and attaching the inhabitants to our church by the strongest of all ties, "the cords

of a man." But, alas! the residence must depend upon the house, and the house upon the income of the benefice: to the improvement of the latter, therefore, should our efforts be first directed, as the moving-spring of all; and if, by any equitable means, the fund at the disposal of the commissioners of Queen Anne's bounty could be enriched, great would be the gain. But if lay patrons of small livings, where they happen to be also impropriators, could be induced to co-operate with the clergy for this same great object, which is national; if the generous spirit which animated their fathers, during half a century, after the Restoration¹, when they had learned in the day of suffering the value of their church, and in the moment of joy at its re-establishment welcomed it with gifts,—if that spirit would stir in them also; if they would re-annex, as was then done so commonly, to these their own livings (we ask no more), some portion, however small, of the tithes which they enjoy, and which were all wrung from the church; a sacrifice which, from its amount, would scarcely be felt by many patrons, and which would not, in fact, be an alienation of so much property, but rather a regulation of the course in which it should run; a reduction, perhaps, of fifty or a hundred pounds a year from an elder brother's rent-roll, to the augmentation to the like amount of a younger brother's benefice;—if the patron and impropriator could be persuaded thus to act, the necessity for non-residence and pluralities would be still more rapidly

¹ Kennett on Impropriations, p. 297.

diminished, and the national church would soon be placed in a more impregnable position than she has ever assumed in this particular, either since the Reformation or before it. And without urging higher motives, without urging even the feudal nature of all property in one sense, held, under God, the Lord of all, on condition of suit and service to be done, and not as an absolute possession to be dealt with altogether according to the pleasure of the occupant,—without pressing this consideration (which is nevertheless a sound one), we shall be borne out in saying, that the possessor of property best secures the permanent enjoyment of it by securing a righteous population to his country; that the respect or contempt of the laws of the land in our parishes, and particularly in our rural parishes, is not a little dependent on the presence or absence of the village pastor; that to insure the local benefit of his residence, therefore, may be worth the while of any man who has a stake to lose; and that, though it may entail upon him the relinquishment of a trifle which he may strictly call his own, and with which he may certainly do what he will; still, it may be for his consideration whether there is not that scattereth and yet increaseth, and whether there is not that withholdeth more than is meet, and it tendeth unto poverty.

Such is our sketch of this great religious revolution: for which, that it came when it did, we have surely, in these days, reason to give God hearty thanks. For to the Reformation we owe it, that a knowledge of religion has kept pace in

the country with other knowledge; and that, in the general advance of science, and the general appetite for enquiry, this paramount principle of all has been placed in a position to require nothing but a fair field and no favour, in order to assert its just pretensions. We are here embarrassed by no dogmas of corrupt and unenlightened times, still riveted upon our reluctant acceptance by an idea of papal or synodical infallibility; but stand with the Bible in our hands, prepared to abide by the doctrines we can discover in it, because furnished with evidences for its truth (thanks to the Reformation for this also!) which appeal to the understanding, and to the understanding only; so that no man competently acquainted with them need shrink from the encounter of the infidel; or feel, for a moment, that his faith is put to shame by his philosophy. Infidelity there may be in the country, for there will ever be men who will not trouble themselves to examine the grounds of their religion, and men who will not dare to do it; but how far more intense would it have been, and more dangerous, had the spirit of the times been, in other respects, what it is, and the Reformation yet to come, religion yet to be exonerated of weights which sunk it heretofore in this country, and still sink it in countries around us; enquiry to be resisted in an age of curiosity; opinions to be bolstered up (for they may not be retracted) in an age of incredulity; and pageants to be addressed to the senses, instead of arguments to the reason, in an age which, at least, calls itself profound. . As it is, we have nothing to conceal; nothing to

evade; nothing to impose: the reasonableness, as well as righteousness, of our reformed faith recommends it; and whatever may be the shocks it may have to sustain from scoffs, and doubts, and clamour, and licentiousness, and seditious tongues, and an abused press, it will itself, we doubt not, prevail against them all, and save, too (as we trust), the nation which has cherished it, from the terrible evils, both moral, social, and political, that come of a *heart* of unbelief.

THE END.

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